



**BARRE TOWN SELECTBOARD MEETING  
December 5, 2023**

**AGENDA**

1. Call to order.....6:00 p.m.
2. Pledge of allegiance
3. Consider approving the agenda
4. Consider approving November 28, 2023 meeting minutes
5. Announcements
6. Receive guests for non-agenda items.
7. Follow up discussion and possible consideration to donate ARPA funds to Barre Youth Sports Association
8. Consider awarding contracts for: **a)** zero-turn mower; **b)** utility cargo van
9. Discuss and consider approving the Five-Year Paved Road Plan
10. Consider approving weekly accounts payable warrants for December 5, 2023
11. Miscellaneous: including permits and licenses if any
12. Round the Table
13. Executive Session: personnel & contracts
14. Adjourn

**MINUTES**

The duly warned meeting of December 5, 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, Bob Nelson, and Mike Gilbar.

**Selectboard Members Absent:** None.

**Staff Members Present:** Town Manager Chris Violette, Town Clerk Tina Lunt, Town Engineer Josh Martineau, and Assistant Town Clerk Catherine Whalen.

**Others Present:** Times Argus Reporter Eric Blaisdell, Paul Hutchins, and Mike Hulbert. Those present virtually: Carol Hebert, David Rouleau, and Josh Howard.

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

1. Move item #9 (Discuss Five Year Paved Road Plan) to Item #12. This way once the Board enters Executive Session they can stay in Executive Session.

**APPROVE THE MINUTES:**

*On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the November 28, 2023 Selectboard meeting minutes with minor spelling and grammatical corrections.*

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- We are seeking registered Town voters who would like to serve on the 2025 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.

**GUESTS:** None.

**BYSA ARPA FUNDS REQUEST:**

Background: Barre Youth Sports Association (BYSA) came before the Selectboard on September 26, 2023, seeking donation from Barre Town using ARPA funds in the amount of \$15,000. This money, if allocated, would assist BYSA in purchasing artificial turf that would be used inside the BOR in Barre to allow year-round use of the facility for a host of possibilities, especially sporting events that BYSA promotes and facilitates. This is a project that has been months, if not years, in the works and has a total cost of approximately \$140,000. BYSA has secured funding from other sources, including money donated from the Ron York Estate and the City of Barre. Now that the City has allocated money, and their quote expires at the end of the month, BYSA is hoping that Barre Town will formally allocate the requested amount so that they can move forward with the purchase.

Those present: BYSA Treasurer Paul Hutchins, BYSA President Mike Hulbert, and Rec Board members David Rouleau and Carol Hebert.

Mr. Hutchins stated BYSA has secured funding from the City. Additionally, Mr. Hulbert said that BYSA's concerns were addressed by the City, noting an agreement will be put in place.

Mr. Hulbert stated that 60-70% of BYSA athletes are Barre Town children. He believes this is a great long-term opportunity for Barre Town and Barre City to work together. Furthermore, Mr. Hulbert said BYSA has been working with other communities on how to best utilize the turf to its fullest ability.

Rec Board members David Rouleau and Carol Hebert both shared they support the turf project. They believe it is a great opportunity and alternative for the community. Mrs. Hebert raised questions regarding the logistics of rental of the turf. Mr. Hutchins said the City Rec Department will be managing the scheduling of the turf.

Board members shared their concerns regarding the City controlling the turf schedule, the rate schedule, and how the turf is being used as a revenue source for the City. Additionally, Mrs. Malone addressed her concerns regarding the “one-sided business arrangement” with the City. Mrs. Malone said if the City is seeing a return on the investment, that Barre Town should have been given the same consideration. She said the project itself, however, is admirable.

Mr. Hulbert said that BYSA will be attending periodic City Council meetings to make sure that money is being set aside for reinvesting in the turf. Mr. Gilbar noted while BYSA is reviewing financials, it would be important to make sure reserve money is going into a dedicated reserve fund.

***On a motion by Bob Nelson, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted 4-1 to approve the expenditure of \$15,000 from the Town of Barre ARPA funds to be donated to Barre Youth Sports Association to assist them in the purchase of artificial turf to be used at the BOR in Barre City. Motion passed.***

Mrs. Malone stated she feels strongly that the City should have communicated with the Town regarding this arrangement. She let Mr. Hulbert and Mr. Hutchins know that she is making a personal donation to BYSA in lieu of her vote, noting she supports the organization but not this business arrangement.

Mr. Hulbert noted BYSA hopes that Barre Town and Barre City Rec Boards take full advantage of the turf.

## **CONTRACTS:**

### **Zero Turn Mower**

**Background:** This year’s Equipment Fund includes \$13,000 for the replacement of the existing 2017 John Deere Zero-Turn mower used by the Recreation Department. Specifications were sent out to four equipment dealers seeking bids on October 23, 2023. As of the bid opening deadline of November 23, 2023, only one bid was received. Champlain Valley Equipment of Berlin, VT submitted a bid of \$13,021.72 for a 2023 Kubota Z-781. Shop Foreman Mike Martel has reviewed the specs and feels they comply. The specifications include an option for a 1-year extended warranty for \$660.00.

Chair White inquired about the way the Town is soliciting bids. Mr. Bolduc echoed the Chair’s comments, noting the antiquated way the Town is sending out the specifications. Mr. Bolduc suggests calling dealers to see what they have, rather than telling them what the Town needs. Town Manager Chris Violette stated calling vendors would not comply with the Purchasing Policy. Conversation continued as the Board discussed revisiting the Purchasing Policy to address this issue. The purchasing threshold needs to be raised for purchasing items. Additionally, the Board needs to revisit the way they go out to bid as the current process is not working.

***On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Mike Gilbar, the Selectboard voted unanimously to award the purchase of a 2023 Kubota Zero-Turn mower to Champlain Valley Equipment of Berlin, VT in the amount of \$13,681.72 for both the mower and a 1-year extended warranty.***

### **Utility Cargo Van**

**Background:** This year's Equipment Fund includes \$65,000 for the replacement of the existing 2013 cargo van which is used by the Water & Sewer Departments. Specifications were sent out to eight automobile dealers seeking bids on October 23, 2023. As of the bid opening deadline of November 23, 2023, only one bid was received. Mercedes-Benz of Burlington Massachusetts submitted a bid of \$70,000 for a 2024 Mercedes-Benz Sprinter AWD van with a 4-cylinder diesel engine. Shop Foreman Mike Martel has reviewed the specifications and feels they comply. Included in the specifications was an option for an extended warranty. Mercedes-Benz of Burlington offered extended warranties of 5-years (\$1,020), 6 years (\$3,025), and 7 years (\$5,025).

Town Manager Chris Violette noted there has been discussion about whether a van is the best option. He said a better option may be a pickup truck, configured with either an extended or crew cab with a utility bed box. The pickup truck would include additional benefits such as having dealers that are closer, availability of gas engine vs diesel, and the flexibility to have a plow installed if desired. After speaking to both staff members who would use the vehicle, and going over the pros and cons, he is not sure what vehicle would be the best option. He recommends rejecting the bid at this time.

***On a motion by Mike Gilbar, seconded by Bob Nelson, the Selectboard voted unanimously to reject the bid from Mercedes-Benz of Burlington due to being over budget.***

### **ACCOUNTS PAYABLE:**

***On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Bob Nelson, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the accounts payable warrants for the week of December 5, 2023.***

**MISCELLANEOUS: None.**

### **ROUND TABLE:**

Justin Bolduc

- Mr. Bolduc inquired about the fueling and def charge for the rental equipment in the warrant.
- Mr. Bolduc noted at the September 5 Board meeting it was estimated that \$400,000 of ARPA funds would be needed for flood repairs, and the last meeting estimated this at \$500,000. Mr. Violette noted the Board suggested setting aside \$500,000 of ARPA funds until the Town knows for sure what the repairs will be.
- Mr. Bolduc inquired about the status of a road name change request. Mr. Violette said he has not spoken to the resident, however, it is in their court to make the change when they are ready.

Norma Malone:

- Mrs. Malone inquired about the Assessor's Errors and Omissions list. Mr Violette stated he will check in with the Assessor on the status of this.
- Mrs. Malone inquired about the EMS billing rates and when the Board will see these. Mr. Violette said the Board should expect to see these very soon.
- Mrs. Malone asked if there were any updates on the stormwater projects? Town Manager Chris Violette stated they are still working on Valley View Circle. Watershed put out a survey, and this will be used to understand the lay of the land. Additionally, Wildersburg has 100% plans, but they

need to be revisited after the flood. The Town is working with the State to reallocate money for the plans. Once the plan is updated they will meet with residents to give them an update.

Mike Gilbar:

- Mr. Gilbar asked for clarification on the reimbursement for the waterline installation that is noted in the Board packet. He asked how the reimbursement will be converted to a loan. Mrs. Malone noted this was a bond vote that went before the voters. The Town received a grant, and the grant was not for the full amount.

### **FIVE-YEAR PAVED ROAD PLAN:**

Background: Historically, in advance of budget preparation, staff and then the Selectboard, review, amend, and approve several 5-year plans. The 5-Year Paved Road Plan is the first of these plans to be completed and ready for review, covering FY '24-28. Town Engineer Josh Martineau has spent a lot of time reviewing and updating each year of the plan. This year's iteration moves a few roads out of year 1, which reduces the number of feet paved. The road scoring system was used as it has been in the past. The scoring of roads is done every two years, and this is the second year so next year the roads will be scored again.

Town Engineer Josh Martineau was present.

Mr. Gilbar inquired about the process for priority road scoring. Town Engineer Josh Martineau explained that every two years roads are scored based on four conditions. The lower the number the better the road condition is. Mr. Martineau stated they try to group roads within the same area, so they are all paved at one time. This is much more cost effective for the Town. The main goal is to keep the sections together. The plan contemplates all roads being paved over a ten-year span.

Mr. Bolduc inquired about the milling that has been added to the plan. Mr. Martineau noted many of the roads are in a condition that they cannot just be overlaid.

### **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 Norma Malone, the Selectboard voted unanimously to go into executive session at 7:22 p.m. for personnel and contracts with possible action and invite Town Engineer Josh Martineau and Police Chief Bill Dodge.*

*On a motion by Bob Nelson, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted unanimously to exit executive session at 9:08 p.m.*

### **ACTION:**

*On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Bob Nelson, the Selectboard voted unanimously to adopt the 5-Year Road Plan as presented.*

**ADJOURN:**

*On a motion by Bob Nelson, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:08 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.