



Town of Barre VERMONT

BARRE TOWN SELECTBOARD MEETING January 3, 2023

AGENDA

1. Call to order.....6:00 p.m.
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Consider approving agenda
4. Consider approving December 20, 2022 meeting minutes
5. Announcements
6. Receive guests for non-agenda items.
7. Interview Budget Committee applicants
8. Quarterly department head visits: a) Fire c) Planning and Zoning, c) EMS
9. Discuss ambulance billing rates
10. Consider approving weekly accounts payable warrants for December 27, 2022 and January 3, 2023
11. Miscellaneous, including licenses and permits if any
12. Round the table
13. Executive session:
14. Adjourn

MINUTES

The duly warned meeting of January 3, 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 W. John “Jack” Mitchell.

Selectboard Members Absent: None.

Staff Members Present: Town Manager Carl Rogers, Town Clerk Tina Lunt, EMS Director Chris LaMonda, and Planning and Zoning Administrator Chris Violette.

Others Present: Times Argus Reporter Eric Blaisdell, Jamie Cushman, Kathi Smith, and Todd Provencher. Those present virtually: David Danforth

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:

Add to item #13 Executive Session: Personnel, contract, and real estate.

APPROVE THE MINUTES:

On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Bob Nelson, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the December 20, 2022 meeting minutes with minor spelling and grammatical corrections.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- The Barre Town Department of Public Works will pick up Christmas trees. The week of January 9 to 13 the DPW will pick up trees north of Route 302, which includes the neighborhoods of Richardson Road, Beckley Hill Road, Camp Street, Trow Hill, Windywood Road, East Hill and Cobble Hill. Please remove all lights, ornaments, garland, and other decorations. The trees are chipped to make mulch. The area south of Route 302 will be picked up the week of January 16 to 20. Winter road maintenance may delay completion of the service.
- We are past the winter solstice, but it still is dark during hours many people walk, run or cycle in the morning before daylight and in the evening after daylight ends. Watch for pedestrians and cyclists. Anyone walking, running, or cycling along roads this winter is advised to wear a light-colored outer garment, a reflective vest or jacket, and carry a light. Please do your part to be seen.
- Our Police Department is accepting applications for both full-time officers and per diem officers, also known as part-time officers. Law enforcement certification is not needed to apply. If interested in learning more call the Police Department at 479-0509. You could start by talking with the chief and riding with our on-duty officers.
- The Community Forest Management Plan Committee has been meeting and meets again on Monday, January 16 at 6:30 p.m. The Committee is updating the Forest Management Plan. It will submit its recommendation to the Selectboard for adoption. The meeting agenda and minutes are posted on the Town website with other Boards and Commissions' agendas and minutes. Meetings are held in the Municipal Building. The public is welcome to attend.

GUESTS: None.

2023-2024 BUDGET COMMITTEE INTERVIEWS:

Background: The opportunity to apply for appointment on the 2023-2024 Budget Committee was announced at Selectboard meetings, published in the Times Argus, posted on Front Porch Forum and at six locations around Town. A total of nine residents applied. The Selectboard appoints two members, and the Town Clerk appoints one member. The three appointees then select the final two citizen members.

Todd Provencher was present. Mr. Provencher has been a Barre Town resident for the past 40 years. He has a Bachelor's degree in accounting and is a certified public accountant. He has worked in both private and public sector accounting in the municipal world. Mr. Provencher has been the Senior Account Manager in Manchester and Finance Manager for the City of Montpelier. He currently is serving as a Projects Accounting Manager for the City of Montpelier. Mr. Provencher stated that a member suggested he submit his name for the Budget Committee, and he thought it would be a good way for him to give back to his community.

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Kathi Smith was present. Ms. Smith has been a Barre Town resident for the past 7 years. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Liberal Arts and has some financial training. Ms. Smith stated she has worked in financial management and analysis positions at UVM and Norwich University for the past 30 years. She retired in 2022 as Norwich University's Budget Director. She stated she was intrigued by the Budget Committee post on Front Porch Forum.

Jamie Cushman was present. Mrs. Cushman has lived in Barre Town for 20 years. She is looking to get more involved within the community now that her kids are older. Mrs. Cushman is employed as the Clinical Nurse Manager of the Emergency Department at Gifford Medical Center. Additionally, she serves as a member of the Board of Directors for White River Valley Ambulance. She noted that she works with a committee to develop that budget and has served on that Board for the past 6-8 years.

The Board thanked the three individuals for coming in and volunteering for the Budget Committee. Appointments are expected to be made at next week's Board meeting.

DEPARTMENT HEAD VISITS:

Background: Fire, Planning & Zoning and EMS share quarterly reports.

EMS

EMS Director Chris LaMonda was present.

A summary of his presentation includes:

- Staffing update:
 - 2 vacant positions were filled
 - Currently looking to fill two per-diem positions
- Truck update: Mr. LaMonda stated that in speaking with the Medix distributor they are hoping a timeline for the two ambulances will be shared soon.
- '23-'24 Budget: no major requests. Mr. LaMonda noted that over the next few years the discussion of staffing will need to take place. There were 4300 calls this past year, which is 180-200 calls more than in previous years.
- Shift Supervisor reports: these are pending, and Mr. LaMonda will have them available in 2 weeks.

Mr. LaMonda expressed he has appreciated his experience with the Town. He stated that EMS is preparing for the new leadership. Chair White thanked Mr. LaMonda for his time and his most recent help with the windstorm.

Mr. Bolduc inquired about Chestnut Place, in Berlin and if this location is affecting the call volume. Mr. LaMonda stated he will review December's data, however, he does believe the majority of the calls may be coming from the Town of Berlin between the Chestnut Place and the Old Twin City Motel.

Fire

Fire Chief Chris Violette was present

A summary of his presentation includes:

- 61 total calls: this was an increase from the previous quarter
 - 18 mutual aid
- Wind event: responded to over 30 trees that were down

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- 8 training events
 - Pump Training / Drafting at Wells Lamson Quarry
 - Truck Check / Station Cleaning
 - Chimney Fire Training
 - SCBA Training
- Recruited four new members
- Officer Meeting
- Veterans Day Parade
- CVDART used the East Barre Fire Station to conduct an animal shelter drill
- BTMES Open House Event
- Annual Halloween Event at East Barre Fire Station
- East Barre Community Santa drive-by on Christmas-Eve
- Radio Study: no new information to share at this time.

Planning & Zoning

Planning & Zoning Administrator Chris Violette was present

A summary of his presentation includes:

- 33 permits issued
- Collected just under \$10,000 in fees
- DRB: met 4 times:
 - Created 6 new subdivisions
 - Issued a Conditional Use permit to Lorenzini Trust
- Planning Commission
 - Lowery Road Solar Project
 - Discussion of Energy Committee
 - Met with Regional Planning Commission
 - Draft of 2023 Consolidated Renewable Energy Standard Models
 - Discussion with State Representatives regarding proposed legislation on zoning restrictions around affordable housing
 - Finalized Tax Map updates

Mr. Mitchell expressed his concerns with the housing crisis. He noted the Town will need to continue to keep an eye on the proposed legislation that will be impacting the zoning restrictions. He thanked Mr. Violette and the Planning Commission for staying on top of it.

EMS BILLING RATES FOR 2023:

Background: EMS Director Chris LaMonda distributed a recommended 2023 fee schedule on December 20. The Selectboard asked for more information before rates were approved.

EMS Director Chris LaMonda was able to collect information from Jeff Spencer of Medical Business Services. This information included a list of VT EMS agencies' rates as of 2020.

Conversation began as Board members discussed the information that was provided to them. The information confirms that ambulance services and other medical service providers' situations is different from other businesses, because in the ambulance business the customer or the customers agent tells the

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provider what they'll pay. Additionally, ambulance services that answer 911 calls have no say in who they serve.

Board members shared their thoughts regarding the information provided by Mr. Spencer. The reality of ambulance billing is raising the rates will not result in a significant revenue increase as it may seem. The challenges are around the collection process.

Mrs. Malone inquired about the 7.5% proposed rate increase. She stated in reviewing the other EMS service rates Barre Town appears to fall in the middle. There is differential in the emergency versus the non-emergency rates. Barre Town has a higher rate for non-emergency services. She suggested the non-emergency service rates could be lowered to be more in line with other services, this would be prudent at this time.

Board members discussed the fact that the private insurance is the piece that is directly being affected. Discussions continued as Board members shared thoughts around the collection process, reimbursements, and the importance of the EMS ambulance service.

In closing, Board consensus is to have more time to review the documents they were provided. This item will be added to next week's agenda for discussion.

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 January 3, 2023.

Mrs. Malone inquired about the First Light bill. She noted that there is a number that is receiving half minute calls to the same number every day. Mr. Violette will look into this.

MISCELLANEOUS: None.

ROUND TABLE:

Jack Mitchell:

- Mr. Mitchell expressed kudos to the Town staff who worked on the windstorm event. He noted that everyone worked well together.
- Mr. Mitchell stated that he would like to send good words out to the power companies and tree crews who were working through the holidays. He noted that the New Brunswick Canada crew was here working in Town and appreciated everyone's support.
- Mr. Mitchell said he has talked to a few people that were without power and they should consider an additional stand-by power source.

Norma Malone:

- Mrs. Malone stated she would like to echo Mr. Mitchell's comments regarding a shout out to the DPW staff and power companies.
- Mrs. Malone thanked Carl for sharing the listing of the number of projects being completed around the Town.

Justin Bolduc:

- Mr. Bolduc inquired about the Act 135 bill and how this will affect the Fire Department. Chief Violette will review the bill.

Paul White:

- Chair White inquired about the LHMP grant kick-off meeting and if someone from the Town should attend. Mr. Rogers noted he is planning to attend on Tuesday.
- Chair White noted he was curious if the Town has been fielding callings regarding the Barre City local option tax. Clerk Lunt shared she has not had to field any calls regarding this matter.

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 Bob Nelson, the Selectboard voted unanimously to go into executive session at 8:15 p.m. for personnel, contract and real estate.

On a motion by Jack Mitchell, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted unanimously to come out of executive session at 9:47 p.m.

ACTION:

On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Bob Nelson, the Selectboard voted unanimously to authorize the Employment Agreement entered into by the Selectboard and Christopher Violette on January 3, 2023.

On a motion by Bob Nelson, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the Town Manager’s recommendation to appoint Andy Lange as Barre Town Fire Chief.

ADJOURN:

On a motion by Jack Mitchell, seconded by Bob Nelson, the Selectboard voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:49 p.m.

APPROVED MINUTES

Barre Town Selectboard

Paul White, Chair

Norma Malone, Vice Chair

Justin Bolduc

Jack Mitchell

Bob Nelson

Selectboard Minutes of January 3, 2023 Continued:

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

ATTEST: _____, Barre Town Clerk.