



**BARRE TOWN SELECTBOARD MEETING
June 27, 2023**

AGENDA

1. Call to order.....6:00 p.m.
2. Pledge of allegiance
3. Consider approving the agenda
4. Consider approving June 20, 2023 meeting minutes
5. Announcements
6. Receive guests for non-agenda items.
7. Consider and possibly award EMS Billing Contract
8. Consider declaring all ARPA Funds expended or obligated
9. Consider Fiscal Year '23 budget carry-overs
10. Consider setting Fiscal year '24 Water and Sewer Rates
11. Consider awarding contract to update the Local Hazardous Mitigation Plan
12. Discuss appointing Constable
13. Consider approving weekly accounts payable warrants for June 27, 2023
14. Miscellaneous: including permits and licenses, if any
15. Round the Table
16. Executive Session: personnel, contract negotiations
17. Adjourn

MINUTES

The duly warned meeting of June 27, 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, Mike Gilbar, and Bob Nelson (arrived at 6:15 p.m.).

Selectboard Members Absent: None.

Staff Members Present: Town Manager Chris Violette and Town Clerk Tina Lunt. Those present virtually: Finance Director Katelyn Kran.

Others Present: Times Argus Reporter Eric Blaisdell. Those present virtually: 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 Norma Malone, seconded by Mike Gilbar, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the agenda as presented.

APPROVE THE MINUTES:

On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the June 20, 2023 Selectboard meeting minutes with minor spelling and grammatical corrections.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- The ever-popular Ice Cream Socials resume on July 11th beginning at the Trow Hill Playground and then every Tuesday thereafter until August 15th at a different playground each week. All the socials begin at 6:30 p.m. and run until 7:30 p.m. or until supplies run out. Keep an eye on flyers throughout town, the Barre Town website, or the Recreation Department’s Facebook page for more details.
- We are looking for a Deputy Health Officer. The Deputy fills in for the Health Officer when not available. Barre Town sees about a dozen Health Officer related calls per year. For more information about this position, contact the Town Manager’s Office at 479-9331.
- Barre Town’s Grand List will be “lodged” in the very near future. This is what assigns value to a property and ultimately, once the tax rate is set, determines what property owners will pay in municipal taxes. If your property value has changed since the last lodging, you will receive a “Notice of Change of Appraisal” in the mail. It is important to understand that within 14 days of the Grand List lodging, all property taxpayers (whether a change was made or not) have the right to file a grievance with the Assessor. This is the only time this occurs. Watch the paper or the Town website for information regarding when the Grand List is lodged.
- Chair Announcements:
 - Chair White followed up on the Ice Cream Social announcement to state that Trow Hill Grocery is officially closed for business. Eddie & Maggie Bisson have sold this property, noting to be sure to wish them well.
 - The Town Offices will be closed on Tuesday, July 4th for the Holiday. The Municipal Building will be open on Monday, July 3rd during regular business hours.
 - There will be no Selectboard meeting on Tuesday, July 4. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 11.

GUESTS: None.

EMS BILLING CONTRACT:

Background: The Selectboard, along with Town Staff, have had multiple discussions over the past few years about exploring EMS Billing alternatives. After much discussion, an RFP was sent out requesting proposals for ambulance billing and collection services. The RFP was sent to 7 billing firms and 3 were received. Bids were received from Medical Business Services of Essex Junction, VT for 6% of collected revenue, Coastal Medical Billing of Lynnfield, MA for 4% of actual receipts, and Quick Med Claims of Pittsburg, PA for 4.95% of collected revenue.

Finance Director Katelyn Kran and EMS Director Paul Ginther recommend that Quick Med Claims of Pittsburg, PA be awarded the contract. Quick Med Claims is a large, national company that has established relationships with insurance companies and with First Financial Resources, the Town's collection company. Additionally, they submitted a very comprehensive proposal.

The Manager asked Board members if they would prefer a presentation from Quick Med Claims or any of the vendors before making a decision. Board members were in agreement that a presentation would not be needed.

Mr. Bolduc asked if the EMS Department is focusing on providing the most accurate information to the billing service. Mr. Violette assured the Board that the ambulance service is working hard to make sure that the proper information is being provided, noting that Town staff is aware of the concerns, and the proper documentation is in place.

Overall, the Board is in favor of awarding the contract to Quick Med Claims, noting their impressive comprehensive proposal. Board members commented on the complexity of the billing forms, patient benefits, thorough process, and the policies they have in place due to financial hardships. In reviewing the proposal, the Board has additional questions pertaining to the timeline and process and has asked Finance Director Katelyn Kran to circle back around to Quick Med Claim before making a final decision. Board consensus is to table this item until they can get those questions answered. This item will be added to the July 11 agenda for future discussion.

EXPENDITURE OF ARPA FUNDS:

Background: Barre Town was awarded \$2,308,253.08 as part of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). All ARPA funds can be declared spent or obligated during FY '23 for operating expenses. It was recommended by Sullivan Powers, Co. & VLCT that the Town take this step this fiscal year.

On a motion by Bob Nelson, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted unanimously to obligate and expend the ARPA funds in the amount of \$2,308,253.08 to offset non-contractual operating expense in the current fiscal year (23). The motion failed with 5 against and 0 in favor.

Discussion began as Mrs. Malone shared concerns around obligating the funds. She inquired about the operating expense list and if this was a requirement. Finance Director Katelyn Kran stated this was simply documentation and for informational purposes. She informed the Board that VLCT has suggested the funds be declared spent or obligated. Mrs. Kran is recommending this take place this fiscal year as this will trigger a single audit which the Town budgeted for. Additionally, Mrs. Malone inquired about the funds that had already been spent and how they were being treated. Finance Director Katelyn Kran stated where necessary the General Fund will transfer funds to those funds that the expenditures came from. Mrs. Malone stated the Town's Administrative Code Section 2-82 refers to the expenditure of appropriated funds. If these funds are obligated, and land in the fund balance, the Town will have restrictions on how these funds are spent. The fund balance can only be spent on budgeted items which will eliminate the Town's flexibility on when they can spend the funds.

Conversation continued as Board members discussed not having the time to commit to the expenditure of the funds. Town Manager Chris Violette stated he does not feel comfortable losing the flexibility on how the funds can be spent. After much discussion, Board members agreed to table this item at this time. The

Selectboard Minutes of June 27, 2023 Continued:

Town has a list of projects they feel will be obligated before the deadline, and if unable to spend the funds they will revisit at that time.

FY '2023 BUDGET CARRY-OVERS:

Background: Annually the Town reviews the current budget to determine whether any items need to be carried over or reserved from the fund balance because the money wasn't spent as intended during the year. The Town Manager provided a spreadsheet that included four items which are being requested to carry over to next fiscal year.

For the record Town Manager Chris Violette stated the following items are also encumbered with purchase orders:

- Baseball lights \$65,419.00
- 2 Ambulances \$144,825.00
- Dump truck \$180,000.00

On a motion by Mike Gilbar, seconded by Bob Nelson, the Selectboard voted unanimously to authorize to carry over the committed fund balance, a total of \$42,840.56 for purchases as noted on the FY23 carry-over spreadsheet.

2023-2024 WATER & SEWER UTILITY BILLING RATES:

Background: The budget was set by the Budget Committee with an annual sewer fee the same as last year, \$350.00. The B.O.D. fee also maintains last year's rate of \$.38 per pound. The fiscal year '24 Water Fund Budget was set the same way as the Sewer Fund and kept the base rate the same as last year, \$67.00 per quarter. The consumption fee was approved with a 2% increase, \$7.68 per 100 cubic feet.

On a motion by Bob Nelson, seconded by Mike Gilbar, the Selectboard voted unanimously to set the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 sewer fees at \$350.00 per year per equivalent unit, and \$.38 per pound for B.O.D.

Mr. Gilbar stated he would like to see the methodology of how the sewer and water rates are set. He noted these should include capital expenses.

On a motion by Mike Gilbar, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted unanimously to set the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 water fees \$7.68 per unit (100 cubic feet) of water consumed, \$67.00 per quarter base charge.

LOCAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN CONTRACT:

Background: Barre Town's Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) expired this past May. To be eligible for emergency funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in the event of a natural disaster, there must be an approved plan in place. The plan is required to be updated every five years and each time that occurs there are several new requirements that the plan must comply with. Vermont Emergency Management (VEM) sought a grant from FEMA to help towns update their plans as part of the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) 2021. Barre Town received an award of \$8,362.50 with an expected 25% match to help update the Town's LHMP. The Selectboard approved the grant agreement in February.

In May an RFP was sent to 9 firms seeking proposals to help the Town update Barre Town's LHMP. Four firms responded. The low bid of \$8,010 was received from OPH Consulting of Waitsfield, VT. OPH is the only firm in Vermont to have achieved an approved plan under the new FEMA guidelines.

Mr. Violette shared he is recommending awarding to OPH Consulting as they have the most experience. The rate per hour is the highest, however, they claim they will be able to complete in the least amount of time.

On a motion by Justin Bolduc, seconded by Norma Malone, the Selectboard voted unanimously to award the updating of Barre Town's Local Hazard Mitigation Plan to OPH Consulting of Waitsfield, VT in the amount of \$8,010 with a contingency of 10% over expenditure.

APPOINTMENT OF TOWN CONSTABLE:

Background: Barre Town amended its Charter this past legislative session, eliminating the elected Constable. Because the bill hadn't passed before the time to add names for the elected positions to the ballot, and due to the uncertainty as to when the Charter amendment would be approved, Constable David Freeman ran unopposed for Constable and was elected on May 9, 2023. As it turns out, the legislature passed the Charter amendment, and the Governor signed the bill on May 4, 2023, five days before election day. As a result, Mr. Freeman's election was not valid.

The Selectboard must discuss the next course of action. There is an option to appoint Mr. Freeman as Constable until a determination is made as to the best path forward for this position. The Charter states the Selectboard may prohibit the Constable from exercising any law enforcement authority.

On a motion by Bob Nelson, seconded by Norma Malone, the Selectboard voted unanimously to appoint David Freeman as Constable, that he shall be authorized to perform the duties specified for Constables in Title 24 VSA §1936a, paragraph (b)(1-6), and that he shall be prohibited from exercising any other law enforcement authority.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE:

On a motion by Bob Nelson, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the accounts payable warrants for the week of June 27, 2023.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Town Manager Chris Violette updated the Board on the following:

- Mr. Violette updated the Board on the status of the large transformer that is scheduled to be moved. Mr. Violette stated the Town has not been well informed regarding this matter. There is now a plan in place that should have a low impact on residents and a notification will be posted on social media.
- Mr. Violette updated the Board regarding the lodging of the grand list. He stated that Assessor Beaudoin was unable to lodge the grand list on June 24, and will be utilizing the extension that is in place. The plan is to lodge by Wednesday next week. There is a tentative Special Meeting scheduled for Thursday, June 6 at 11:00 a.m. to set the tax rate.

ROUND TABLE:

Justin Bolduc

- Mr. Bolduc commented on the Route 110 Bridge Project. He stated that he met an Estes Tractor Tractor while using the Old Route 302 detour. This road is posted for this size vehicle. He asked the Manager if the State had sent out notifications that there was a road closure. Mr. Violette stated he did not believe they did. Mr. Violette stated the Town can ask AOT to submit a request through 511.

Mike Gilbar

- Mr. Gilbar asked the Town Manager if the Public Works Department could haul a dresser from a ditch on Farwell Street. He stated he was driving up Farewell Street and he saw that this was dumped there.
- Mr. Gilbar inquired about the Selectboards priority list. Chair White stated his plan is to categorize the items. Mr. Gilbar suggested to start adding items to the Board agendas to begin the streamlining process.

Chris Violette:

- The Town Manager shared that the FY '22 Town reports are now available at the Municipal Building and at local stores throughout town.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

On a motion by Justin Bolduc, seconded by Norma Malone, 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 7:37 p.m. for personnel and contract negotiations with possible action.

On a motion by Justin Bolduc, seconded by Mike Gilbar, the Selectboard voted unanimously to exit executive session at 9:24 p.m.

ACTION:

On a motion by Paul White, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted unanimously to authorize the non-union employee wages as presented by the Town Manager.

ADJOURN:

On a motion by Justin Bolduc, seconded by Mike Gilbar, the Selectboard voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:25 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.