



**BARRE TOWN SELECTBOARD MEETING  
September 19, 2023**

**AGENDA**

1. Call to order.....6:00 p.m.
2. Pledge of allegiance
3. Consider approving the agenda
4. Consider approving September 12, 2023 meeting minutes
5. Announcements
6. Receive guests for non-agenda items.
7. Public Hearing for Yield sign on LePage Road
8. Discuss prior EMS Billing Accounts Receivable
9. Discuss future of the Equipment Fund
10. Report of the Finance Director
11. Consider approving weekly accounts payable warrants for September 19, 2023
12. Miscellaneous: **a)** liquor license for Neddo Family Vineyards, LLC; **b)** other permits and licenses if any
13. Round the Table
14. Executive Session: contracts (possible action)
15. Adjourn

**MINUTES**

The duly warned meeting of September 19, 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 and Finance Director Katelyn Kran. Those present virtually: Town Clerk Tina Lunt

**Others Present:** Times Argus Reporter Eric Blaisdell and Chris Neddo.

**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 September 12, 2023 Selectboard meeting minutes with minor spelling and grammatical corrections.*

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- Expanded hours for the Holden Road Lawn Waste site have begun. For the rest of September, the site will be open Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. & Saturday, 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. In October, in addition to the days mentioned, the site will extend Saturday hours to 4:00 p.m. and be open on Sundays, 12:00 – 4:00 p.m. If you have any questions, please contact the Town Manager’s Office.
- Looking for something fun to do for kids and adults this fall? The Barre Town Recreation Department is hosting “Fall Festival” again this year on October 14<sup>th</sup> at the Barre Town Recreation Field. Kids will be treated to fun events like pumpkin painting and the famous hay bale maze. Please join us for lots of fun beginning at noon and running until 6:00 p.m. There will also be a movie at dusk.
- Whether you are a professional or just like to snap pictures with your phone for fun, the Town is looking for pictures taken in Barre Town for its new website. Let’s show off our beautiful Town! We are inviting our residents and visitors to take part in sharing photos that spotlight the Town of Barre. Photos can be emailed to Tina Lunt at [tlunt@barretown.org](mailto:tlunt@barretown.org).

**GUESTS:** None.

**PUBLIC HEARING – YIELD SIGN ON LEPAGE ROAD:**

Background: This is a warned public hearing and second reading in accordance with Part I, Chapter 6, Section 37 of the Town of Barre Charter, whereas a proposed amendment to Chapter 7, Article III, Section 7-44 of the Code of Ordinances “Stop & Yield Signs” was introduced on September 5, 2023. Said ordinance amendment would ordain a new yield sign to be placed on Town Highway 43 (LePage Road) at the intersection with Beckley Hill Road. The addition of this proposed yield sign was recommended by the Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC) after holding a public hearing during its June 21, 2023 regular meeting.

*On a motion by Bob Nelson, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted unanimously to open the public hearing at 6:04 p.m. to take comment on the proposed ordinance amendment to Chapter 7, Article III, Section 7-44 “Stop & Yield Signs”.*

There were no public comments.

*On a motion by Bob Nelson, seconded by Mike Gilbar, the Selectboard voted unanimously to close the public hearing at 6:05 p.m. and to advance to a third reading on September 26, 2023 and to read by title only.*

Chair White read the proposed ordinance amendment.

**EMS BILLING ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE:**

Background: The Town has a few different pools of uncollected money as a result of past EMS billing practices. After the May 4, 2022 Board of Abatement (BOA) meeting, there is uncertainty on how to handle the oldest of these funds. The BOA voted to deny abatement requests made by the Town in regards to these

uncollected funds. In their motion to deny, it is noted that the item be presented to the Selectboard for further discussion. The Town has since migrated to a new EMS billing service. The Town is looking to clean up these outstanding balances. This is a discussion on how to proceed with these uncollectible balances.

Finance Director Katelyn Kran was present. Mrs. Kran informed the board that there is an open balance of \$1,678,648.38 of uncollectible funds from old accounts prior to July 1, 2017. These funds have been written off in the audit, but the Town needs to decide how they want to proceed with these uncollected funds. As of July 1, 2017, calls started going to First Financial Resources for collection.

Mr. Violette stated that Quick Med Claims is not taking calls before September 1, 2023. EMS Billing is going to keep working them through December 31, 2023 and then all of those calls will go to First Financial. Mr. Nelson asked what the plan is moving forward with uncollectable funds. Finance Director Katelyn Kran said she expects there will be a much smaller number with the new billing company but realistically there will always be some monies that are uncollected.

Discussion continued as questions were raised on who the responsible party is to write off the uncollectible funds. Mrs. Malone stated there was a Charter change in 2014, based on a legal opinion provided to the Town, which allowed any taxpayer to request abatement of any tax, assessment, charge, or other levy. 24 V.S.A. § 1535 states the Board may abate charges related to tax, water, and sewer. Mrs. Malone stated it is not necessary that these charges are handled through the Board of Abatement and there is a methodology within the accounting process that these funds can be managed. In her opinion, the Board of Abatement is not a sensible option, and the Charter is problematic. Mr. Gilbar stated he agreed with Mrs. Malone, noting state statute does not speak to EMS billing.

Board members emphasized they understand they are not in a desirable situation, but they are trying to rectify the problem and do everything they can to not allow a situation like this to arise in the future. To avoid this the Board employed a collections agency and transitioned to a new billing company.

Board consensus is that because the funds have already been written off in the audit there is no specific action that needs to be taken. The only place these open accounts exist is within the EMS Billing software. After December 31, 2023, when EMS Billing is no longer employed, these funds will not transition to the new billing company.

### **EQUIPMENT FUND:**

Background: After review of the Financial Audit Report in May, the topic of the Town's use of Internal Service Funds (Building Maintenance Fund and Equipment Fund) surfaced once again. During discussion, there was a desire to take a deeper look into the best way to handle them, especially initially, the Equipment Fund. This agenda item is to begin this conversation.

Mr. Gilbar shared an Equipment Fund analysis of the FY'24 budget with Board members. This document was shared electronically for viewing purposes as he gave an overview of the document. Mr. Gilbar explained the Equipment Fund is currently acting as an Equipment Maintenance Fund, and there is no reserve or balance in this fund. He suggested two options to unravel this situation. Mr. Gilbar said all expenses could be moved back to the other appropriate funds and use the Equipment Fund as a Capital Reserve Fund. This would require adding more money into the budget. Additionally, Mr. Gilbar suggested keeping it as an Internal Service Fund but not allocating salaries. This would result in no reserves.

Finance Director Katelyn Kran stated she would be fine moving forward with either option. Mrs. Kran is not opposed to keeping the Equipment Fund as an Internal Service Fund. She does believe the two mechanic salaries should stay in this fund. Additionally, assets would need to be moved to their appropriate funds. There would still be fund transfers from the appropriate funds into the Internal Service Fund.

Mr. Gilbar noted the Equipment Fund is misleading. He believes accounting and staff timewise it makes sense to change this fund to a Capital Reserve Fund. Mrs. Malone stated she believes there is a much simpler way to approach this, noting the concept of the maintenance operations needs to be evaluated. She does not recommend a Capital Reserve Fund, noting it is the methodology that needs to be looked at.

Board consensus is that for FY'23 and FY'24 the Fund will operate as an Internal Service Fund, holding no assets or liabilities, and netting to zero dollars at the end of each fiscal year. The Fund will be further reviewed throughout the FY'25 budgeting process to determine how best to handle it in future years.

A brief discussion took place regarding the Building Fund. Mr. Violette has collected information from Department Heads and a future Selectboard discussion regarding this fund will follow.

### **DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORT – FINANCE DIRECTOR:**

Background: Finance Director Katelyn Kran will provide an update on activities related to the Finance Department and be available for questions.

Finance Director Katelyn Kran was present.

Mrs. Kran updated the Board on the following items:

- Town Manager Assistant Leslie Babic is learning payroll and other HR duties
- Audit:
  - The FY'23 audit will begin mid-late December. Mrs. Kran's goal is to complete it by the end of January. The auditors were unable to guarantee this.
- A budget vs. actuals report was shared with Board members for review. Mrs. Kran gave a brief overview of this document. Board members asked questions, as necessary.

### **ACCOUNTS PAYABLE:**

*On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted to approve the accounts payable warrants for the week of September 12, 2023. Bob Nelson abstained.*

### **MISCELLANEOUS:**

*On a motion by Bob Nelson, seconded by Paul White, the Selectboard voted unanimously to authorize the Town Clerk to approve a Special Events Permit for a Class 4 Liquor License application for Neddo Family Vineyards, LLC for an event on September 30 through October 1 at 73 Neddo Road.*

Chris Neddo, owner of Neddo Family Vineyards, LLC was present. Mr. Neddo stated this event is for the soft opening of their new tasting room. It is a two-day event, noting the time is 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. both days. Additionally, grape crushing/processing will take place.

Mr. Violette updated the Board on the following:

- Mr. Violette announced that the Town has officially registered for the Opioid settlement.
- Mr. Violette shared the latest update on the baseball field poles. He stated the poles are coming out of kiln and should be here before October. The Rec Director will organize the delivery destination once they arrive in Town.

**ROUND TABLE:**

Mike Gilbar:

- Mr. Gilbar shared the Fall Bulk trash event was successful. There were 23 volunteers and 3 DPW staff members who worked at the event. The day was slower than usual. The traffic pattern worked well. Additional signage will be needed for the following event. A total of 125 trips were recorded.

Chair White:

- Chair White shared that the Board has received a letter of resignation from a member of the Rec Board. The Selectboard will need to recruit for this.

**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 Mike Gilbar, the Selectboard voted unanimously to go into executive session at 7:47 p.m. for contracts.*

*On a motion by Bob Nelson seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted unanimously to exit executive session at 8:36 p.m.*

**ADJOURN:**

*On a motion by Bob Nelson, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:36 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.

Selectboard Minutes of September 19, 2023 Continued:

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