



**BARRE TOWN SELECTBOARD MEETING  
April 16, 2024**

**AGENDA**

- 1. Call to order.....6:00 p.m.
- 2. Pledge of allegiance
- 3. Consider approving the agenda.
- 4. Consider approving April 9, 2024 meeting minutes
- 5. Announcements
- 6. Receive guests for non-agenda items.
- 7. Second Public Hearing on Town Charter Amendment
- 8. Discussion with Assessor
- 9. Continue discussion on Police Department’s in-car camera issues
- 10. Consider approving weekly accounts payable warrants for April 16, 2024
- 11. Miscellaneous: **a)** a Second-Class License for Martin’s Food of South Burlington, LLC; **b)** other permits and licenses if any
- 12. Round the Table
- 13. Executive Session: personnel (action expected)
- 14. Adjourn

**MINUTES**

The duly warned meeting of April 9, 2024, 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 Clerk Tina Lunt, Assessor Russ Beaudin, Chief William Dodge, and EMS Director David Danforth. Those present virtually: Town Manager Chris Violette.

**Others Present:** Times Argus Reporter Eric Blaisdell.

**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 Mike Gilbar, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the amended agenda as follows:*

- 1. Item # 13. Executive Session: add contracts

**APPROVE THE MINUTES:**

*On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Bob Nelson, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the April 9, 2024, Selectboard meeting minutes with minor spelling and grammatical corrections.*

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- We are seeking volunteers to help operate the Holden Road Lawn Waste Site on weekdays through the summer and fall. Lawn Waste Site volunteers are not required to help unload vehicles. The primary responsibilities are to open and close the site and to make sure people know how to use it properly. Public Works personnel staff the site on Saturdays, 8:00 a.m. to noon, and we have one volunteer for Tuesdays, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. More volunteers would allow the site to be open additional days. Barre City residents are welcome to volunteer as well.
- Speaking of the Holden Road Lawn Waste Site, unless mother nature decides to throw us another curveball, the site will open on Saturdays beginning April 20<sup>th</sup>, 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Tuesday hours will begin April 30<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Barring any unforeseen circumstances, the site should be open on Saturdays and Tuesdays through fall.
- The Spring Bulk Trash Collection is scheduled for Saturday, May 11<sup>th</sup> from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the DPW garage 79 Pitman Road, stay tuned for more details. To continue to make this very popular event successful, we need help. Volunteers can work the entire event or part of it, and we provide everything you need including safety equipment and food. Free disposal is offered to those that help and sometimes you might even find a treasure to take home.
- Green Up Day is Saturday, May 4. Supplies, such as green trash bags and gloves will be available soon at the Town Manager's Office, in the Municipal Building.
- If interested or would like more information about the preceding volunteer opportunities, or information about Green Up Day, contact the Town Manager's Office at (802) 479-9331.

**GUESTS:** None.

**PUBLIC HEARING – TOWN CHARTER AMENDMENT:**

Background: This is the second of two public hearings (first one held on April 9, 2024) to amend Chapter 3, Section 10, 12, and Section 39 of Barre Town's Charter in accordance with 17 V.S.A. § 2645. Official notice of the proposed amendment was filed as a public record with the Town Clerk on March 29, 2024. This hearing was duly warned in the newspaper on April 11, 2024, and warnings were posted in four public places including the Municipal Building.

*On a motion by Bob Nelson, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted unanimously to open the public hearing at 6:06 p.m.*

Chair White provided a summary of the proposed Charter amendment. This amendment will strike all references to the Auditor from the Town Charter.

*On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Bob Nelson, the Selectboard voted unanimously to close the public hearing at 6:08 p.m.*

**DISCUSSION WITH TOWN ASSESSOR:**

Background: Assessor Russ Beaudin will be available to discuss Barre Town's Common Level of Appraisal, Coefficient of Dispersion, and anything else the Selectboard would like to discuss with him, including when a reappraisal might be necessary. The Selectboard has been provided with information from the state about the 2023 Equalization Study Results to help with the discussion.

The Town of Barre 2024 CLA (Common Level of Appraisal) is 86.93% or .8693. The 2024 COD (Coefficient of Dispersion) is 16.21.

Assessor Russ Beaudin was present. Mr. Beaudin provided the Board with updated descriptions of the CLA and COD he obtained from the Vermont myVTax website ([myvtax.vermont.gov](http://myvtax.vermont.gov)). He noted that the CLA has changed dramatically with appreciation of property values all over the state. Due to this, the State has dropped the CLA as the trigger for a reappraisal. Mr. Beaudin stated the CLA is a 3-year study which makes it appear that the Town is at 86%. Mr. Beaudin explained a 3-year study does not really give you an accurate picture, so he completed a 1-year study which shows the Town at 68%.

Additionally, Mr. Beaudin shared the Legislature decided to move forward with a 6-year reappraisal plan, noting State officials have until December to come up with a plan. Assessor Beaudoin stated beginning this year the State will only consider the COD to trigger a reappraisal.

Mr. Bolduc shared that he reviewed the Equalization Study for the State of Vermont, noting 2/3 to 3/4 of the towns are listed for reappraisals. Mr. Bolduc said the Town of Barre is going down approximately 10% a year on CLA and up 4% on COD. A 20% COD triggers a reappraisal and given where the Town is currently at, there will need to be a reappraisal next year. Mr. Beaudoin said he does not expect this number to change drastically, as the 1-year study he just completed showed COD at 16%.

Mr. Beaudoin shared that he spoke with the State about doing a statistical update. He was not sure if this was still an option with the current Legislation, but PRV (Property Valuation and Review) has advised towns to keep moving forward with what they feel is best. Mr. Beaudoin said there may be a financial benefit to a statistical update as well. Board members inquired what this would entail. Mr. Beaudoin explained it is a random selection of neighborhoods, commercial/industrial, categories, etc. and then number crunching. The appeal/grievance process would work the same way. A statistical update would need to be completed prior to 2026. The Assessor said it would be a great way to get into the 6-year cycle.

Concerns were raised regarding staffing for reappraisals to be completed every 6 years. The State is limited in qualified individuals to complete this work. Additionally, Mr. Beaudin notes the possibility of the State of Vermont requiring towns to use one uniform software. Discussion continued as Mrs. Malone inquired about VTPIE. Mr. Beaudoin gave a brief update on the new grand list system, noting it has been delayed another year.

Mr. Beaudoin advises getting more information from the State regarding moving forward with a statistical update. This would take 6 months to complete, and the State would determine the number of parcels that would be included. He will talk to the State to get a deadline date if the Town decides they would like to move forward with this. This item will be added to a future agenda for further discussion purposes.

**POLICE DEPARTMENT IN-CAR CAMERAS:**

Background: This is a follow up discussion from the April 2, 2024 meeting. Chief Dodge will be in attendance to explain several developments that have occurred over the last couple of weeks regarding the in-car and body cameras the Police Department uses. Since the last meeting, the Chief has heard from both Watchguard and Axon with potential proposals that could be advantageous to the Town. Additionally, the Chief has met with Axon and received a presentation explaining their in-car camera system. The Axon cameras would have all the functions that the Watchguard cameras do, possibly more.

Watchguard can offer the option to defer payment on a five-year contract by one year for five in-car cameras and replace all the departments existing Axon cameras “one-for-one” at no charge. A contract with Axon comes with unlimited cloud storage and a no cost extended warranty (for the term of the contract). Chief Dodge believes that there are many advantages to switching the in-car cameras to Axon.

Chief William Dodge was present. Chief Dodge provided a summary of pros and cons, including quotes from each vendor. The quotes are as follows:

Axon: \$44,224.80

Watchguard: \$38,049.00

The Axon contract includes 4 new in-car cameras (installed by Axon employees), a cloud-based storage program, car cameras and body cameras sync, and the quote includes extended warranty for the duration of the contract. Chief Dodge said the Axon quote of \$44,224.80 reflects a 10% discount that they offered today.

The Watchguard contract includes 5 new in-cameras (the Town would be responsible for installation) and 12 new body cameras. The Watchguard cameras would not sync to the body cameras. Additionally, Watchguard is not a cloud-based program, and the Town would need to purchase a standalone computer system from Watchguard for an additional \$6-7k. Chief Dodge stated the Watchguard proposed contract is typically closer to the \$90,000 range, noting they are offering a \$50,000 discount. The Chief said as far as customer service the sales representative he has been working with has been helpful and reached out to him several times.

Chief Dodge recommends the Town enter into the 5-year contract with Axon. He said he would like to get on their installation schedule asap as they are booking 12 weeks out. Board members are in agreement. This item will be added to the agenda next week.

**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 April 16, 2024. Bob Nelson abstained.*

Mrs. Malone inquired about the invoice from Charles Curtis, LLC. She asked when that invoice was actually received. Mr. Violette said they were missing a form from the vendor and it got lost in the shuffle.

Mrs. Malone inquired about the #14 truck work being completed, and the status of the new truck. Mr. Violette said they just need to finish the financing of the new truck, but it has been delivered. The old #14 is currently being used.

**MISCELLANEOUS:**

*On a motion by Justin Bolduc, seconded by Mike Gilbar, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the 2024 Second Class License for Hannaford Supermarket & Pharmacy, Store #8129 d/b/a Martin's of South Burlington, LLC.*

- Mr. Violette reported that the auditors will be in next week to work with Finance Director Katelyn Kran.

**ROUND TABLE:**

Norma Malone:

- Mrs. Malone followed up on the Websterville water concerns. She said she would be interested in receiving an update from Robert Clark at OtterCreek Engineering, noting she would like to hear his perspective.
- Mrs. Malone followed up on the conversation last week regarding bill H.875. She said she has spent much time reviewing this bill. The Ethics Commission is very supportive of this bill, and she does not see it being shelved. Mr. Gilbar noted he spoke with Ted Brady from VLCT, and he sounds like there is support for the bill, but it would be good to hear from municipal officials. Mr. Gilbar noted the bill states it excludes school districts and this was bothersome.

Justin Bolduc:

- Mr. Bolduc said he spoke with Mr. Farnham about the discoloration in his water and he will be purchasing a filtering system. He said the phone call was awkward and it did not sit well with him. Mr. Bolduc feels a future conversation needs to take place to look at the Town's global water system.

Mike Gilbar:

- Mr. Gilbar inquired about the VLCT Model Credit Card Policy. He suggested getting this item added to an upcoming agenda. Chair White will create a first draft of the Credit Card Policy and send to Jennifer Allard for review. Bob Nelson will provide additional feedback.
- Mr. Gilbar inquired about a Fraud Policy for the Town. VLCT has a model one and suggests the Town also visit this topic of discussion. Mr. Bolduc asked if a sub-committee should be considered when reviewing policy updates. Mr. Violette said the Fraud Policy can be added to next week's agenda to get the conversation going as this one should be simple.

Paul White:

- Chair White inquired about the Fire Chief's quarterly report. He asked about the 18-1 mutual aid calls ratio, sharing concerns around provided vs. received calls. He asked if this was a normal percentage. Mr. Violette confirmed it was for as long as his career. Mr. Violette said having two strong stations, staff members, and equipment he believes other towns turn to us because of the quality of service.
- Chair White was unable to attend the last BADC meeting. He knows they are close to meeting their Strategic Plan deadline. He wants to make sure someone from the Town is involved with these meetings as he will soon no longer be an elected official.

**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 public 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 7:50 p.m. for personnel and contract with action expected, and invite EMS Director David Danforth and Town Clerk Tina Lunt.*

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

**ACTION:**

*On a motion by Justin Bolduc, seconded by Mike Gilbar, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the modification of the non-union wage schedule as discussed.*

**ADJOURN:**

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

APPROVED MINUTES

Barre Town Selectboard

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

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Justin Bolduc, Vice Chair

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Norma Malone

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

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

Filed in the Barre Town Clerk's Office on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2024.

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