



**BARRE TOWN SELECTBOARD MEETING**  
**April 2, 2024**

**AGENDA**

1. Call to order.....6:00 p.m.
2. Pledge of allegiance
3. Consider approving the agenda.
4. Consider approving March 26, 2024 meeting minutes
5. Announcements
6. Receive guests for non-agenda items.
7. Discuss Future of Police Cruiser Cameras
8. Police Chief Department Report
9. Consider approving Thunder Road’s 2024 Police Service Agreement
10. Consider approving Thunder Road’s Special Event Permit
11. Discuss Fall Bulk Trash collection
12. Discuss and approve the revised Recreation Field Unfit to Play Policy
13. Review proposed 2024 annual Warnings for upcoming May elections
14. Consider approving weekly accounts payable warrants for April 2, 2024
15. Miscellaneous: **a)** Great Energy Store apply for a Tobacco Substitute Endorsement, Tobacco License, and Second-Class License; **b)** other permits and licenses if any
16. Round the Table
17. Executive Session: personnel
18. Adjourn

**MINUTES**

The duly warned meeting of April 2, 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 Manager Chris Violette, Town Clerk Tina Lunt, and Police Chief William Dodge.

**Others Present:** Times Argus Reporter Eric Blaisdell, Doug Farnham, and W. John “Jack” Mitchell. Those present virtually: Recreation Director Johnny Crossley.

**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 agenda as presented.*

Selectboard Minutes of April 2, 2024, Continued:

1. Add item #12.5: Discussion regarding office hours on April 8
2. Item #17 Executive Session: add labor contract and contracts

**APPROVE THE MINUTES:**

*On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Mike Gilbar, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the March 26, 2024, Selectboard meeting minutes with minor spelling and grammatical corrections.*

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- The Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District will be holding a Household Hazardous Waste Collection Saturday April 13th at the Public Works Yard at 79 Pitman Road. Eligible items include paints or stains without identifiable labels, paint thinners, cleaners that contain bleach etc. The hours are 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The cost is \$20 per vehicle and is available to Barre Town residents and residents of any member town.
- Public Works summer help wanted. If you or you know somebody that may be home from college this summer and would like to help our road crew on various summer projects, this is a great opportunity to make a little money.
- We are seeking volunteers to help operate the Barre Town 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 and we have one volunteer for Tuesdays. More volunteers would allow the site to be open additional days. Barre City residents are welcome to volunteer as well.
- We are also always seeking volunteers to help with the annual Spring Bulk Trash Collection event. This event will be held on May 11<sup>th</sup> from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Volunteers can work the entire event or parts thereof. We provide safety equipment and food. Who knows, you might even get to salvage something interesting for yourself.
- If interested in any of these preceding employment or volunteer opportunities, or you would like more information, contact the Town Managers Office at (802) 479-9331.
- Chair Announcement: At the conclusion of last week's meeting after coming out of executive session, the Selectboard unanimously voted to amend the non-union wage chart.

**GUESTS:**

Doug Farnham was present. Mr. Farnham lives at 332 Websterville Road. Last year, Mr. Farnham shared concerns regarding the rust in the Websterville waterlines. He reports that he continues to have discoloration in his water. Mr. Farnham said the Water Department has tested the water and deems it to be drinkable. Furthermore, last fall the lines were flushed more frequently to help with the discoloration. Mr. Farnham states his family is unable to drink the water due to the continued discoloration and washing clothes has become problematic. A sample of the discolored water was shared with the Board.

Mr. Violette confirmed that the lines connected to Mr. Farnham's house were not replaced during the Websterville waterline project. Mr. Violette explained that replacing the line from Gregoire Street to Mr. Farnham's line is likely the solution. Mr. Bolduc suggested looking into whole house filters to resolve this issue. Overall, this would be much more cost effective as there are very few properties who are affected by this issue.

The Board asked the Manager to add this item to next week's agenda for a topic of discussion. They would like to run this concern by Town Engineer Josh Martineau.

### **POLICE CHIEF REPORT:**

**Background:** Police Chief William Dodge will provide a report on the activities of the department over the last few months.

Police Chief Dodge was present. Chief Dodge updated the Board on the following:

- Training
  - Chief Dodge & Corporal De Prato attended K9 training
  - Officer Tremblay attended active threat response training
  - Annual taser and use of force training
  - NCIC recertification
  - Upcoming: first aid and spring firearm qualifications
- Employment/Staffing update
- School Resource Officer
  - 208.5 hours worked this quarter. Chief Dodge reports that Officer Tremblay is spending a great deal of time helping cover these hours
- Officer Tremblay has joined the Safety Committee. Officer Tremblay will attend ALICE training
- K9
  - 4 deployments
- Thunder Road
- Highway Safety Grants
  - DUI Grant
  - OP Grant
- Vehicles
  - Current mileage
- Stats
  - Down from last quarter. Chief Dodge believes this is due to staffing

Chief Dodge asked that the public please be careful when taking/sharing photos. It is important to understand when pictures are shared there is zero control over where they go. Chief Dodge stressed the importance of being cautious and that you "think before you click". The Police Department has been seeing many of these incidents.

A brief conversation took place regarding exploring other options regarding school dismissal and use of the Rec Road. The Manager and Chief will be discussing this topic soon and will share ideas.

**POLICE CRUISER CAMERAS:**

Background: The current Watchguard program that allows the Police Department's cruiser cameras the ability to download videos is no longer supported. The Police Chief has had a difficult time getting an answer as to whether the Department will be able to download this program on a new computer. Even if they are able, he reports that the current program is not compatible with Windows 11 which is what the Police Department computers are using except for the Clerk's but that is about to be replaced too. In the short term, they may be able to keep the computer the Clerk is using for this one purpose, but the real answer is a new contract at a cost of \$26,000. The Manager and Police Chief have been discussing whether to keep the car cameras. There are some that aren't working and some needing upgrade again at a cost. The officer body cameras would be kept.

Chief Dodge was present. Chief Dodge stated that four years ago Watchguard cameras were purchased for \$30,000. At that time, the software for the cameras was a standalone program, and there was no contract. Recently, Watchguard sent a contract agreement for the software. Watchguard reports that the current program is no longer supported and will not operate on a Windows 11 computer. However, in speaking with a Watchguard Representative today he learned that they are in the development stages of a standalone program that will be compatible with Windows 11. The timeframe and cost of this program has not been announced. Because of this, he reached out to Axon for a quote. A contract with Axon (including new cameras) would cost the Town \$49,137.60.

Discussion focused on the quality of customer service, the value of having cameras in the cars, and the pros and cons between the two contracts. Chief Dodge shared that in speaking with Finance Director Katelyn Kran there is approximately \$80,000 projected in unused salary due to being short staffed. Ultimately, this would cover the cost of the Axon contract. Conversation continued as Board members agreed that based on Watchguard's poor customer service, an Axon contract that includes cameras, and cloud-based footage, moving forward with Axon would be a good investment.

In closing, the Chief noted he has a meeting with Axon to discuss the details of the contract. A final decision will be made next week.

**THUNDER ROAD POLICE SERVICES AGREEMENT:**

Background: Thunder Road's Cris Michaud and the Police Chief have met and discussed the upcoming racing season. The season is comprised of 21 events and the two have agreed to a security plan of three uniformed officers at all events with the possibility of additional officers if any special extra staffing is needed or prudent. There doesn't appear to be anything remarkably different this year than in the past with regard to racing events. The season will kick off on Saturday May 4th with the annual car show and practice, the Town does not provide officers for the kickoff event. The following day will be the first actual racing event that our officers will be present at. The season will conclude (assuming no weather delays) on Sunday October 6<sup>th</sup> with the running of the annual Milk Bowl.

*On a motion by Bob Nelson, seconded by Justin Bolduc the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the 2024 Police Services Agreement with Thunder Road and authorizing the Town Manager to sign conditioned upon receiving a new insurance certificate prior to the current one expiring.*

**THUNDER ROAD SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT:**

Background: In accordance with Town Code, Chapter 5 (Public Safety), Article III (Special Events) the Selectboard authorizes the Town Clerk to issue Special Event Permits. Thunder Road has provided an

insurance certificate that is in effect until June 3, 2024, a copy of their contract with Speedway Safety Services, and their valid State of Vermont Motor Vehicle Racing Permit (April 1, 2024 – March 31, 2026). The \$800 permit fee has been paid.

*On a motion by Bob Nelson, seconded by Mike Gilbar, the Selectboard voted unanimously to authorize the Town Clerk to sign the Special Event Permit for Thunder Road for the 2024 race season.*

**FALL BULK TRASH:**

Background: Last week Mike Gilbar raised the idea of not having a fall bulk trash event in 2024. While there seemed to be support (potentially) for eliminating it, the Board wanted some input from past organizers. The Manager spoke to Jack Mitchell who said that the second event was added in the fall to alleviate some of the workload from the spring event. The idea was that if people had the option of waiting until fall, they may not feel the urgency to go in the spring. Additionally, by having an event after the summer season, it allowed anybody who might have done a summer construction project to bring demolition material in the fall as opposed to having to hang on to it until the following spring or pay the higher price by taking it to the landfill.

Mr. Violette stated after speaking to Mr. Mitchell, he feels there is justification for having two events. He understands it is more difficult to find volunteers for the fall event. Mr. Gilbar shared that he reviewed the statistics, and the fall event is less cost effective but there were still a fair amount of residents utilizing the service. A question was raised if the second Saturday in September was problematic for lining up volunteers due to it being Tunbridge fair weekend. The Board advised possibly revising this date.

Mr. Mitchell was present. Mr. Mitchell shared a brief history of the bulk trash events. Mr. Mitchell shared in 1995 the Town started with one collection in the spring. He said they soon learned this was a mistake as dumpsters were getting filled. They added on the fall collection to help. He understands volunteers are hard to find but does feel it benefits the taxpayers. He does not recommend eliminating the fall bulk trash event.

Board consensus is to continue with the fall bulk trash event, however, the date may be revisited as well as the hours.

**FIELD UNFIT TO PLAY POLICY:**

Background: The Field Unfit to Play Policy was presented last week with Recreation Director Johnny Crossley and Recreation Board Chair David Rouleau in attendance. The two explained the rationale for revising the policy. The Board recommended a few minor edits, including changes to the last sentence of the document to note that the “Recreation Director may recommend additional penalties to the Town Manager for multiple offenses or in the case of severe damage”. The previous version left the levy of additional penalties to the Recreation Board.

*On a motion by Justin Bolduc, seconded by Mike Gilbar, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the Field Unfit to Play Policy.*

**APRIL 8 TOWN OFFICE HOURS:**

The Manager stated that the south side of Barre Town will not be in totality of the solar eclipse. He said that he feels strongly that this rare opportunity is a gift and wants to make sure staff can witness it. He has met with staff, and all are interested in being able to catch the solar eclipse if possible.

The Manager recommends the Town advertise and close the Municipal Office at 2:30 p.m. He notes that emergency services are upstaffed and hopes if there are no emergencies they too will be able to enjoy the totality of the solar eclipse. Additionally, the Town will be prepared to open EOC (Emergency Operation Center) if necessary.

Board consensus is to close the Municipal Building at 1:00 p.m. This will allow all staff ample time for travel.

**REVIEW PROPOSED WARNING FOR ANNUAL ELECTION:**

Background: Before next week's official action to approve the warnings for both the Annual Town Meeting and the Annual Election of Officers and Voting by Australian Ballot, the Manager has asked the Selectboard to review the proposed language for the warnings. The Annual Town Meeting warning is the same as previous years, other than date changes. The Annual Election of Officers and Voting warning has been crafted with the approved budget amounts and new language for Article 2 regarding the General Fund. The proposed language for Article 2 was crafted by Attorney Mike Monte and the Manager and then reviewed by Finance Director Katelyn Kran and Katie Buckley who is the Director, Federal Funding Assistant Program at the Vermont League of Cities and Towns.

The Manager notes that all are comfortable with the language as drafted, it doesn't run afoul of any Federal rules or requirements and hopefully is clear to the voters that \$514,576 of the \$5,108,126 General Fund budget won't impact the tax rate. The proposed language for the Charter amendment is also on the warning but that language was previously approved by the Selectboard. Formal approval of these warnings will be on next week's agenda.

The Board reviewed the warning, suggesting minor necessary amendments.

**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 April 2, 2024.*

**MISCELLANEOUS:**

*On a motion by Chair White, seconded by Mike Gilbar, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the 2024 Second Class License, Tobacco License, and Tobacco Substitute Endorsement for Great Energy Store, Inc d/b/a Rickie's Shell & Deli, Inc.*

Town Manager Chris Violette shared the following updates:

- Mr. Violette announced that the new message boards have been deployed and are currently displaying eclipse messages.

**ROUND TABLE:**

Norma Malone:

- Mrs. Malone said she has been missing the written quarterly reports from Department Heads. Mr Violete noted he will have some to share soon.
- Mrs. Malone said she saw the Manager’s notes about his meeting with Andres Torzzo from Watershed Consulting. She asked the Manager to keep the Selectboard in the loop regarding these discussions. This way if they get questions from residents, they will have the most updated information to provide.

Justin Bolduc:

- Mr. Bolduc shared concerns about emergency services during the solar eclipse. He is concerned that EMS staff will not be able to get to the hospital due to traffic. Additionally, cell phone service is concerning. The Manager shared that EMS Director David Danforth has signed up phones on Verizon for priority.
- Mr. Bolduc inquired about last week’s AP warrants. He said one department has over \$9,000 in purchases and feels these should not be credit card purchases. Mr. Violette states the state requires permits to be paid for this way. Additionally, Mr. Bolduc inquired about the upfitting of the vehicle charge that was paid for using the credit card. Mr. Violette said this item was addressed. Mr. Bolduc suggests a credit card policy be put in place. Furthermore, he asked why the Town has a rewards card, stating the Town should have a basic credit card. Mr. Violette said that credit cards were a recent topic at the most recent Department Head meeting.
- Mr. Bolduc said he stopped into the Wilson vault as he had concerns. The pointing is in year 4 of the Building Plan. He asked for an analysis to be completed to see if this timeframe is sufficient.

**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 8:07 p.m. for personnel, labor contract, and contracts.*

*On a motion by Bob Nelson, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted unanimously to exit executive session at 9:04 p.m.*

**ADJOURN:**

*On a motion by Bob Nelson, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:04p.m.*

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APPROVED MINUTES

Barre Town Selectboard

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Paul White, Chair

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Justin Bolduc, Vice Chair

Selectboard Minutes of April 2, 2024, Continued:

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Norma Malone

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

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Bob Nelson

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

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