



**BARRE TOWN SELECTBOARD MEETING
February 27, 2024**

AGENDA

1. Call to order.....5:00 p.m.
2. Pledge of allegiance
3. Consider approving the agenda
4. Consider approving February 20, 2024 meeting minutes
5. Announcements
6. Receive guests for non-agenda items.
7. Consider approving Watershed Consulting’s Scope of Work for 3-Acre stormwater site design
8. Discuss Freeman, French, Freeman’s Facility Assessment & Functionality Proposal
9. Discuss upcoming April 8th Solar Eclipse plans
10. Authorize purchase of Sewer Van
11. Review annual weight reduction authorization letter from VT AOT
12. Consider approving weekly accounts payable warrants for February 27, 2024
13. Miscellaneous: **a)** Catering Permit for Good Measure, Inc. **b)** other permits and licenses, if any
14. Round the Table
15. Executive Session: as needed
16. Adjourn

MINUTES

The duly warned meeting of February 27, 2024 was held at the Barre Town Municipal Building, Selectboard Room, in Lower Websterville at 5:00 p.m.

Selectboard Members Present: Paul White, Norma Malone, Justin Bolduc and Mike Gilbar. Those attending virtually: Bob Nelson.

Selectboard Members Absent: None.

Staff Members Present: Town Manager Chris Violette and Town Clerk Tina Lunt.

Others Present: Times Argus Reporter Eric Blaisdell and FEMA Public Assistance Supervisor Timothy Baker. Those attending virtually: Lee Walther, Sheila Walther.

CALL TO ORDER: Chair White called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Those present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVE THE AGENDA:

On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the amended agenda as follows:

1. Add item #9.5: Continue discussion regarding private road/sign request

APPROVE THE MINUTES:

On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the February 20, 2024 Selectboard meeting minutes with minor spelling and grammatical corrections.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: None.

GUESTS: None.

WATERSHED CONSULTING – SCOPE OF WORK AND SITE DESIGN:

Background: During the last two meetings, the Board discussed the need to move forward with design work for the stormwater systems of the seven sites the Town is responsible for. The design work is necessary so that stormwater permits can be obtained that are compliant with the 3-acre impervious surface law. Andres Torizzo of Watershed Consulting provided a Scope of Work proposal dated February 16 that shows a total cost of \$761,589. With the hope of engineering and permit fee grants, the cost may lower to \$521,689. As requested, Mr. Torizzo provided an estimate that projects which fiscal years the costs will be incurred beginning this year (FY24 15%, FY25 65%, FY26 20%). The purpose of this agenda item is to approve the proposed proposal so that Watershed can begin the necessary site work and engineering to stay on schedule.

The Manager reported that the Town has received two of the grants and is hopeful they will receive all of them.

Mr. Bolduc inquired about item #6 on the Scope of Work proposal. This is in regard to performing outreach activities with landowners. He asked the Manager if Watershed Consulting could provide a fee schedule. Additionally, Mr. Bolduc inquired about the Clean Water State Revolving Fund, and asked if Mr. Torizzo is looking into this funding opportunity on behalf of the Town. Mr. Violette confirmed that he is.

Mrs. Malone stated she understands the necessity in moving forward with this project, however, shared concerns about approving the proposal when the Town has not yet confirmed funding. Conversation continued as Board members discussed the September 2025 deadline, noting stalling on this would jeopardize hundreds of grant dollars. In closing, Mrs. Malone suggested looking at alternatives in case the Town does not get the funding they are hoping for.

On a motion by Mike Gilbar, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted unanimously to authorize the Town Manager to sign the Watershed Consulting Scope of Work proposal dated February 16, 2024.

FREEMAN, FRENCH, FREEMAN’S FACILITY CONDITION ASSESSMENT & FUNCTIONALITY PROPOSAL:

Background: Over a year ago, the Selectboard discussed getting a Scope of Work proposal and cost estimate for a Facility Condition Assessment (FCA) for Town facilities. The Burlington based architectural firm, Freeman, French, Freeman was asked to put together a proposal that would assess the Town’s major facilities and provide guidance on facility maintenance and future capital improvement investments, along with cost estimates for budgeting purposes. In addition, the scope would also review the functionality of at least the municipal building and Public Works facilities. During the Board’s meeting on January 16th, the

first proposal was discussed, and it was noted that the plan contemplated too many less significant facilities and didn't offer a functionality assessment. The proposal came to \$67,000. The Manager asked Freeman, French, and Freeman (FFF) to eliminate some of the Town's structures which covered less square footage. Additionally, they were asked to provide an estimate for a facility assessment of the municipal building and Public Works facilities. The new proposal lowers the overall square footage and the cost, but not by a lot. The total estimated cost is now \$62,300 but could be more for customary reimbursables. The facility assessment adds \$9,840 to the overall cost of the proposal.

Discussion began as Mrs. Malone noted errors in the proposal. She said the actual square footage should be 63,229 and the error is due to duplicates. Conversation continued as Board members continued to analyze the proposal noting additional duplications and errors.

Mr. Gilbar asked what the timeline would look like for this project. According to the proposal, FFF will complete the project in 20 weeks. He noted the Board did previously discuss this expense being covered by ARPA funds.

Board consensus is to go back to Freeman, French, and Freeman to correct the proposal. Further discussion will be necessary once adjustments have been made to make a decision.

SOLAR ECLIPSE:

Background: Parts of Vermont will experience a total solar eclipse on Monday, April 8, 2024. Vermont is expecting a large influx of visitors seeking to see the eclipse. Hotels and other overnight accommodations have been sold out for months in a good portion of Vermont. Many entities are planning viewing parties and other festivities during the event which will begin in our area at 2:14 p.m., be total at 3:25 p.m., and over at 4:37 p.m. While impossible to know for sure what impacts the region may experience, many are predicting thousands of visitors coming to the area bringing potential heavy traffic and other impacts. This could also occur during mud season which won't be helpful if those seeking to see this rare natural event. Schools and businesses have already announced early dismissal for the day and some businesses are encouraging their employees to work remotely that day.

The Manager notes, from an emergency management perspective, the Town will continue to monitor the situation, attend bi-weekly discussions with Vermont League of Cities and Towns, monitor information from Vermont Emergency Management, and will consider standing up additional emergency services during the event if necessary. Recreation Director Johnny Crossley is considering promoting one viewing venue to be at the recreation area, and he, along with others, will be monitoring what towns around may also be doing for this event.

Mr. Violette stated the Agency of Transportation's biggest concern is electric vehicles, and those vehicles ending up being stranded on the interstate as they will have no way to charge their cars. Additionally, they are looking to possibly open the interstate up to three lanes of traffic. Furthermore, Mr. Violette stated he is concerned about the backroads. He notes if the main roads are backed up people may seek alternative routes and during mud season this could be a problematic. Additionally, the Manager reported that cell phone coverage may be impacted. The state is planning to bring in portable cellphone towers to help with this.

Chair White advised residents to fuel up and go shopping, and not to wait until April 8. He said his largest concern is emergency services. Mr. Violette said all emergency services will be staffed on this day.

Mrs. Malone asked if there is any guidance in terms of protective eyewear. The Town has a limited number of free eclipse glasses available to Town residents. These can be picked up at the Town Clerk's Office, there is a limit of four per household.

CONTINUE DISCUSSION OF REQUEST FOR PRIVATE ROAD / SIGN:

Background: At the February 13, 2024 Selectboard meeting, the Board discussed the request for a private road name. Mr. Blow who owns property in both Barre Town and Williamstown requested to name the private road "Go Kart Ridge". This property is accessed through a private property that originates through Barre Town. After much discussion, the Board agreed to add a blue and white E911 sign to designate the address of this location. Mr. Blow asked the Selectboard to reconsider their decision by adding a sign at the end of the driveway to designate the name of the business.

Chair White stated that the property owner is requesting that the Town adds a brown and white sign with the business name. He notes, brown and white signs are designated for recreation use and this business is for recreational purposes. Furthermore, Chair White inquired about the sign that was located at the intersection of Quarry Hill and Fisher Road that said "Thunder Road." Chair White notes apparently this sign has been stolen but was wondering if Mr. Violette knew the history around the sign placement. Mr. Violette did not know the answer, but he will reach out to the previous Manager.

Mr. Nelson asked if the residents business charges an entry fee for spectators. It was confirmed they do not charge an entry fee but do have a concession available. Mr. Nelson stated if this is the case than he would echo Mr. White's comments regarding this being classified as recreation and possibly lean towards the brown sign if it meets town and state codes.

Discussion continued as Board members shared concerns around the request. Mr. Bolduc said he does not believe the Town should be putting up a sign on private property or setting this precedent. Mrs. Malone echoed Mr. Bolduc's comments regarding setting a precedent, noting this situation could be problematic. Mrs. Malone said her issue is this business has been located here for over two decades and signage has never been a concern. Her understanding is that these signs are for recreation and cultural guidance, and they are used for non-profit or municipal owned property.

Mr. Gilbar asked that the Manager follow up with Mr. Rogers regarding the history of the Thunder Road sign placement. The Board will revisit this request once they have more information.

AUTHORIZE PURCHASE OF SEWER VAN:

Background: Last fall a bid was put out to purchase a van suitable to replace the current van used by the sewer and water operator. One bid came back, and it was for a vehicle that wasn't suitable for the Town's needs, and it was over budget. The Town did not receive a bid from a Ford dealer which offers an all-wheel drive van, and, in the end, the one bid received was rejected on December 5, 2023. During that discussion in December, there was some thought of shifting from a utility van to truck instead and since that time, we have worked towards finding an option that includes a truck while keeping an eye out for a van. Recently, Town staff has located a Ford all-wheel drive van that will meet their need and be under the \$67,000 budgeted amount.

The Manager noted a truck may offer options that a van doesn't such as adding a plow if desired and potentially a little better access to tools and equipment, however, adding a plow adds expenses and extra wear and tear. The benefits to keeping a van is that items in the van aren't exposed to the cold like they could potentially be in a truck.

On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Mike Gilbar, the Selectboard voted unanimously to authorize the purchase of the 2023 Ford transit cargo van for \$57,885 (which includes the 7-year extended warranty) from Grappone Ford of Bow, New Hampshire noting that this purchase went out to bid in October of 2023 and only one proposal was received and that the bid was rejected because it wasn't suitable for the Town's needs.

Mr. Violette announced the extended warranty options. He recommends the 7-year extended warranty.

ROAD WEIGHT POSTING AUTHORIZATION

Background: This is an annual notification from VT AOT which allows municipalities to post their roads with a reduced weight during certain times of year to protect them from damage.

This item is for notification purposes only.

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 February 27, 2024.

Norma inquired about the school tax payment. Mr. Violette will follow up with Treasurer, Jen Allard regarding this item.

MISCELLANEOUS:

On a motion by Chair White, seconded by Norma Malone, the Selectboard voted unanimously to authorize the Town Clerk to approve a Request to Cater Malt, Vinous and Spirituous Liquors application for Good Measure Brewing Company for an event on March 2, 2024 at Wilkins Harley Davidson, 663 South Barre Road.

On a motion by Chair White, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted to approve the 2024 Second Class Liquor License and Tobacco Substitute Endorsement for Global Montello Group d/b/a Jeffy mart #450. Bob Nelson abstained.

Mr. Violette updated the Board on the following items:

- Mr. Violette reported two stormwater grants have been received.
- Mr. Violette announced that all four Village Center Designations were approved. The areas are East Barre, South Barre, Lower Graniteville and Upper Websterville. He noted that the Planning Commission will be doing some public outreach soon. The Manager said Planning Zoning Administrator Brandon Garbacik did an outstanding job on this project.
- Mr. Violette reported that the EWP grant application funding has been submitted. Mr. Violette said if this gets approved it will be at 100%. Chair White asked if there has been any communication with the Sterling Hill residents. The Manager said he will be reaching out to them with an update.

- Mr. Violette shared that Town Attorney Mike Monte has drafted the ballot language for the Charter change. Additionally, he has a timeline laid out.

ROUND TABLE:

Norma Malone:

- Mr. Malone commented on her road and expressed gratitude for the Town workers.

Justin Bolduc:

- Mr. Bolduc said he reached out to Rec Board Chair David Rouleau regarding the upcoming Freezing Fun for Families event regarding the fields.
- Mr. Bolduc said that the Town’s CLA has “tanked” to 87%. He suggests the Board discussing this soon. He believes this is residential driven and would like to hear from the Assessor regarding this. Mrs. Malone said CLA is no longer the trigger for reappraisal due to the change in Legislation. Reappraisals are now required every 6 years. She said the Assessor should be able to educate the Board regarding this matter. Mr. Violette will add this to an agenda item and invite the Assessor for discussion.

Mike Gilbar:

- Mr. Gilbar inquired about the stormwater utility idea that was discussed previously. He asked if this was something that may want to be considered. Mr. Bolduc asked if it would make sense to have a Working Group look into this option. Mrs. Malone suggested beginning this work in the summer months. This will be added to a future agenda.

ADJOURN:

On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted unanimously to adjourn at 6:17 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 _____, 2024.

ATTEST: _____, Barre Town Clerk.