



**BARRE TOWN SELECTBOARD MEETING
February 6, 2024**

AGENDA

1. Call to order.....5:00 p.m.
2. Pledge of allegiance
3. Consider approving the agenda
4. Consider approving January 30, 2024 meeting minutes
5. Announcements
6. Receive guests for non-agenda items.
7. Discuss participating in tree planting program with Spaulding High School
8. Discuss FY 24-25 Paving Contract
9. Discuss the abolished Auditor's Town Charter amendment
10. Consider approving weekly accounts payable warrants for February 6, 2024
11. Miscellaneous: including licenses and permits if any
12. Round the Table
13. Executive Session: as needed
14. Adjourn

MINUTES

The duly warned meeting of February 6, 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 present virtually: Bob Nelson.

Selectboard Members Absent: None.

Staff Members Present: Town Manager Chris Violette, Town Clerk Tina Lunt, Recreation Director Johnny Crossley, and Town Engineer Josh Martineau.

Others Present: Times Argus Reporter Eric Blaisdell.

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 agenda as presented.

APPROVE THE MINUTES:

On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Mike Gilbar, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the January 30, 2024 Selectboard meeting minutes with minor spelling and grammatical corrections.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- To accommodate Budget Committee meetings which begin at 6:00 p.m., Selectboard meetings are now starting at 5:00 p.m. and will maintain this start time through the end of March.
- The next quarterly installment of property taxes and the second semi-annual sewer payment are due February 15th.
- The Barre Town Fire Department will host their annual rabies clinic on Saturday, March 9th from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Public Works garage, 79 Pitman Road. Keep an eye on the Fire Department's Facebook page for more details.
- Speaking of keeping an eye out, be looking in your mailbox for the February news flyer. The flyer will not be a full newsletter, as we will now move to three newsletters a year. The February flyer is packed full of helpful election information.

GUESTS: None.

SPAULDING HIGH SCHOOL TREE PLANTING PROGRAM:

Background: Recreation Director Johnny Crossley became aware of a tree planting program through Spaulding High School. The plan would be to plant trees to offset carbon used by the school district. Mr. Crossley will give a brief presentation about the plan to see if the Board has interest in pursuing taking part in this program.

Recreation Director Johnny Crossley was present. Mr. Crossley shared a presentation with Board members. Mr. Crossley reported that Spaulding High School's treeplenissh program's goal is to help plant 1000 saplings, and he is proposing the Town helps with this. Mr. Crossley said he has reviewed the list of tree offerings and recommends the Town plant red maple saplings. It is noted that Spaulding High School students would be planting the trees as part of community service. The planting would take place on May 5th.

Mr. Crossley is proposing that a total of 26 trees be planted. The saplings would be planted in 2 different locations. He recommends planting 13 saplings in the Rec Area, and another 13 at the East Barre Playground.

Discussion continued as Board members shared concerns around the maintenance of the trees. Mr. Nelson noted that White Tail deer love red maple saplings, and the trees would need to be protected. Additionally, the Board advised finding out where the sewer line is located at the Rec Area before planting the trees in this location. Mr. Crossley will work with Town Engineer Josh Martineau to help identify the sewer line area. Additionally, Mr. Crossley will follow up with Spaulding High School to see what equipment comes with the trees for protection.

Board consensus is they have no issues with moving forward with the planting of trees.

FY25 PAVING CONTRACT:

Background: After last week's discussion, Town Engineer Josh Martineau and the Manager met to discuss coming up with a path forward that would try to meet the Town's need. Town Engineer Josh Martineau has come up with 9 options for the Board to review. All options include paving most roads but with big differences and priorities. Mr. Martineau provided the Board with a spreadsheet that lays out each option. Additionally, Mr. Martineau has spoken with ECI who provide an option that wouldn't change the unit cost.

Mr. Martineau recommends option #4, where milling from the opposite side of town (from the storage area in Websterville) would be eliminated. This alternative would pave all the original roads, except for the gravel portion of Sterling Hill. This option would be \$73,386 over the amount approved in the 5-Year Road Plan and \$227,739 less than the original bid price. Assuming no cost overruns, once the paving for this year is completed, the FY24 paving budget should have a \$50,000 surplus which will offset much of the FY25 additional cost.

Town Engineer Josh Martineau was present. The Board thanked Mr. Martineau for all his work.

Mr. Nelson shared that the Board has received two emails from residents recommending not to change anything and to move forward with the regular plan. Chair White noted he could be in favor of this option or with the engineer's recommendation. Furthermore, Mr. Bolduc said paving everything this year as originally proposed is too big of a jump in spending in his opinion. He agrees that Mr. Martineau's option #4 is the best alternative for the Town. Overall, the Board agreed.

Mrs. Malone noted that option #4 will pave all roads that were originally planned to be treated, however, what has changed is the scope of the milling.

On a motion by Justin Bolduc, seconded by Mike Gilbar, the Selectboard voted unanimously to award the FY25 paving contract to ECI Construction out of Williston, VT for \$1,398,197.85 with the understanding there will be a change order.

Camp Street Update:

Mr. Violette reported the Town has been proceeding full steam ahead to fix Camp Street under the Federal Highway Administration Emergency Repair. Mr. Violette noted the option of sheet piles driven into the ground rather than digging up the ground was being considered. Recently, the State has decided that this project isn't being considered an emergency repair. The Manager and Town Engineer met with VTTrans on Friday once they learned of this news. Unfortunately, the scope of the project does not fall into the emergency repair guidelines. Mr. Violette said that this news is extremely disappointing, and he continues to push back.

Board members asked what this will do to the road closure. Mr. Violette said this is not something staff are ready to answer yet as they need to look into options. Mr. Violette will report back on this matter as soon as possible. A brief discussion was had regarding different options for reopening the road.

Mr. Nelson thanked Mr. Martineau for his hard work on these items.

CHARTER AMENDMENT – OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR:

Background: Last week it was mentioned that now that the position of elected Auditors has been abolished, all references to the position needs to be removed from the Town Charter. The conventional thinking is that to accomplish this, another Charter amendment vote would be required. This week, Clerk Lunt was working with State Representative Gina Galfetti and Legislative Council Tucker Anderson on language to amend the Charter based on the Town’s vote. During this discussion, Ms. Galfetti was told by Mr. Anderson that, given the fact the Auditor position has been abolished, reference to the position can be removed now, without a Town Charter vote. The Town asked Town Attorney Mike Monte for his opinion on this option, he is ok with this as long as the Town makes sure it is removed from all sections of the Charter that reference the Auditor.

Board members are in agreement with the legislative counsel’s recommendation to abolish the language throughout the Charter, and they consensus is to move forward with this process. Mrs. Malone noted the provision in Section 10(f). Regarding this, Board members recommend that the Legislative is asked to make a reference in the Charter regarding the Office of the Auditor, noting the rights that remain if voters want to bring the Office back.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE:

On a motion by Justin Bolduc, seconded by Norma Malone, the Selectboard voted to approve the accounts payable warrants for the week of February 6, 2024. Bob Nelson abstained.

MISCELLANEOUS: None.

ROUND TABLE:

Paul White:

- Chair White inquired about the Rec Board vacancy and if an appointment will be made next week. The Manager has been in contact with some of the candidates and plans to add this item to next week’s agenda.

Justin Bolduc:

- Mr. Bolduc stated during budget research he saw there was money in the budget to extend the East Barre Bike Path. He understands the Town would need to get across private property. Mr. Violette said Mr. Rogers initiated survey work. Since then, Mr. Violette has spoken with landowners to grant an easement, however, the Manager has not heard anything further.
- Mr. Bolduc noted the 5-Year Plans are still not on the website.
- Mr. Bolduc asked if the Board could get a Budget vs. Actuals report for salt

Mike Gilbar:

- Mr. Gilbar asked if the Manager has heard anything about compliance issues with the City regarding the sewer. Mr. Violette said he has a meeting next week with the City and the State, and will follow up regarding this matter.

ADJOURN:

Selectboard Minutes of February 6, 2024 Continued:

On a motion by Mike Gilbar, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted unanimously to adjourn at 5:54 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.