



**BARRE TOWN SELECTBOARD MEETING  
January 9, 2024**

**AGENDA**

- 1. Call to order.....6:00 p.m.
- 2. Pledge of allegiance
- 3. Consider approving the agenda.
- 4. Consider approving January 2, 2024 meeting minutes.
- 5. Announcements
- 6. Receive guests for non-agenda items.
- 7. Interview Energy Committee Candidates
- 8. Introduction of new Aldrich Public Library Executive Director Kristin J. Baumann
- 9. Discuss and consider information from Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) regarding July flooding.
- 10. Discuss bringing in not-for profit groups during upcoming budget sessions.
- 11. Discuss and consider purchase of tasers for Police Department.
- 12. Police Department Report
- 13. Consider Energy Committee Appointments
- 14. Consider approving weekly accounts payable warrant for January 9, 2024
- 15. Miscellaneous: including permits and licenses, if any
- 16. Round the Table
- 17. Executive Session: Personnel and Labor Contract (no action expected)
- 18. Adjourn

**MINUTES**

The duly warned meeting of January 9, 2024, was held at the Barre Town Municipal Building, Selectboard Room, in Lower Websterville at 6:00 p.m.

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

**Selectboard Members Absent:** None

**Staff Members Present:** Town Manager Chris Violette, Assistant Town Clerk Catherine Whalen, Police Chief William Dodge

Those present virtually: None.

**Others Present:** Phil Cecchini; Jeff Gagne, Jr.; Kristin J. Baumann, Nancy Pope

**CALL TO ORDER:** Paul 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 Mike Gilbar, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the amended agenda as follows:*

- a) Add contracts under executive session, with possible action.*
- b) Postpone item #13 until all interviews are completed.*

**APPROVE THE MINUTES:**

*On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Bob Nelson, the Selectboard voted to approve the December 19, 2023, Selectboard meeting minutes with minor spelling and grammatical corrections.*

Bob Nelson abstained, as he had not been present at the December 19<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- Request forms for early/absentee ballots for the Barre Unified School Districts and the Central Vermont Career Center School District's annual election are now available. The March 5, 2024 election also includes the Presidential Primary and you can request that ballot now as well. Ballots can be requested through My Voter Page at [mvp.vermont.gov](http://mvp.vermont.gov), by calling the Town Clerk's Office at (802) 479-9391, or emailing Tina Lunt at [tlunt@barretown.org](mailto:tlunt@barretown.org) or Catherine Whalen at [cwhalen@barretown.org](mailto:cwhalen@barretown.org).
- Christmas Tree collection has begun! The Public Works Department will be around collecting trees placed along the side of the road. Feel free to contact Public Works if you think that they missed your tree at 476-3522. Please make sure that ALL decorations have been removed before placing it outside and please be patient, weather could delay pickup.
- Dog registrations are due April 1, 2024. Licensing your dog with the Town Clerk each year is a State requirement and a civic duty to ensure the health and safety of the residents of Barre Town. To obtain a new license, the Town Clerk's Office must have a copy of your pet's current rabies certificate on file. If the Town Clerk's Office has a current copy of this certificate, you were notified by email or mail and you can simply register your animal online or by using our register-by-mail service. If the rabies certificate on file has expired or will expire by April 1, 2024, you were notified by mail or email. Once you obtain an updated certificate, you may contact the Town Clerk's Office to license your animal.
- To help with licensing your dog if their rabies vaccination is expired or about to, The Barre Town Fire Department will hold their annual rabies clinic on Saturday, March 9th from 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. at 79 Pitman Road. For your convenience, the Town Clerk's Office will be open this day from 10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. for the purpose of dog licensing. Visit [barretown.org](http://barretown.org) where more information will be provided soon regarding this event.
- Covid Test Kits are available at the Town Office and at the Barre Town EMS building on McLaughlin Road. The kits are free and there are no limits, but please only take what is needed. Hours at the Town Office are 8:00 am to 4:30 pm. EMS staff can arrange pick up if you cannot make it during those hours.

- The Selectboard will be meeting at regularly scheduled time on January 16<sup>th</sup>, January 23<sup>rd</sup> there is no meeting, and January 30<sup>th</sup> will start at the new time of 5:00pm.

**GUESTS:** None.

**INTERVIEW ENERGY COMMITTEE CANDIDATES:**

Background: The Energy Committee was formed on November 14<sup>th</sup> and since that time staff has been working towards getting it off the ground. This first meeting is targeted for February 7<sup>th</sup>. The committee is to include five members. To date, four residents have expressed interest and two of them, Phil Cecchini and Jeff Gagne Jr., will be interviewed this evening.

Phil is a Town resident residing on Lisa Drive. He appears to have a relevant background because of several roles he fills as an employee of Capstone Community Action. While he has a professional interest in energy efficiency, he states that he has a personal interest as well. Phil has served on the Barre Town Budget Committee, Barre City's Energy Committee, and is a co-founder of the Barre Energy Awareness Resource Group (BEAR).

Jeff Gagne Jr. is a resident of Graniteville and is currently attending Vermont Technical College, majoring in Renewable Energy. Jeff has an interest in renewable energy and would like to protect the natural resources of Barre Town as well as address the needs of energy use. Jeff has a family legacy of public service and is interested in working in his degree field for experience.

**INTRODUCTION OF NEW ALDRICH PUBLIC LIBRARY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:**

Background – Nancy Pope introduced Kristin Baumann as the new Director of the Aldrich Library. Kristin came to Barre from Rhode Island and is happy to find the community and nature similar to that which she appreciated in her prior home. Ms. Baumann plans to visit the Selectboard 3-4 times a year.

Kristin gave a short talk on her plans for the library, including the York Branch, as well as her passion for energy saving measures. She also came up with some fun data on the usage of the library between Town and City residents. The Board believes that Kristin is a great fit and looks forward to working with her in the upcoming year.

**EMERGENCY WATERSHED PROTECTION (EWP):**

Background – After the storm in July and damage resulting from it, residents of Sterling Hill asked for the Town to assist them by seeking help via the Emergency Watershed Protection Program. Properties at the bottom of Sterling Hill, along the brook, had been damaged and a substantial amount of debris deposited on their properties. The brook channel itself was filled with debris and the water relocated across some of the neighboring properties. Several neighbors came to a Selectboard meeting to make us aware of this issue and to see whether the Town could help them.

On August 29, 2023, the Town Manager submitted a letter to the Vermont Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) (an agency of the United States Department of Agriculture) requesting federal assistance. This request was very time sensitive and by making the request, a long process of USDA Engineers reviewing the numerous sites that we identified (including the Sterling Hill area) that had watershed impairment. After the inspections by USDA officials, we waited to be notified which sites, if

any, would be eligible for funding based on program guidance. We recently received those findings; five sites were approved, and the findings include cost estimates for each. It should be noted that the Washington Street site is being looked at by FEMA for the Wildersburg sewer line issue. There is concern whether the USDA's site remediation is even feasible and at over a half a million dollars, by far the costliest.

Each site stands on its own merit so we can choose which projects we'd like to pursue, if any. Funding only covers 75% of the cost of any one project, somebody else must pick up the balance which doesn't have to be the Town. The next step is to complete a grant application which is due on February 19, 2024. The work will have to be completed by July 24, 2024, making a very tight, nearly impossible timeline. These are only estimates, as well, so the true cost may be much higher than projected.

Deciding to fund any of the projects is one discussion, however, another is the significant work the Town will be responsible for to get the process moving and oversight of it. As noted in one of the letters, USDA will not be able to help with final engineering, we would have to contract somebody to do that. We can also contract somebody to oversee the process and general costs associated with consultants should be covered, but maybe not all. In any case, there would be quite a bit of work for staff and that should be noted.

Action: Chris Violette will contact the residents of Sterling Hill with the results from the NRCS and present the pros and cons of the grant. They will need to decide rather quickly if they want to proceed. If they do, the Town is the sponsor of this grant, and will have to set to work quickly. An agreement will also need to be made as to who is paying for what. Chris will also be inquiring about any extension to the timeline from the USDA.

### **NOT-FOR-PROFIT GROUPS:**

Background: The Town Manager wanted to prepare for budgeting sessions by discussing when not-for-profit groups could present their requests. The Board agreed that sooner is better. The goal was set to submit written reports to the Budget Committee by January 30<sup>th</sup> and have a meeting with those groups on February 6<sup>th</sup>. Chris Violette will give notice so requests can be made.

### **PURCHASE OF TASERS FOR POLICE DEPARTMENT:**

Background: The Barre Town Police Department utilizes incapacitating devices called Tasers. Currently the Police Department uses the "Taser X2" which, based on manufacturer declaration, have a five-year shelf life. It will soon become difficult to replace cartridges and batteries as the model is retired. The Police Chief has provided a memo detailing the different tasers plus a request to have a plan to replace the Taser X2. His request is to purchase Taser 7's, which should be supported for a while, this year, using what is expected to be a surplus in the Police Department budget due to the wage line item being underspent. The latest model, Taser 10, are available but will require taser trainers to be re-certified. The course for recertification costs \$6,800. The tasers themselves cost \$3,500- \$4,000 each. For each officer to have a taser, plus a backup, the chief is asking that 7 be purchased and one more be budgeted for a future officer.

*On a motion by Paul White, seconded by Norma Malone, the Selectboard voted unanimously to purchase seven Taser 7, in the FY'23-'24 budget.*

### **POLICE DEPARTMENT REPORT:**

Background: – Chief Dodge provided a report on activities related to the Police Department over the last several months. Some highlights include: All officers have exceeded the 30 hours of required training and K-9 officer, Lakota, is back to work after a surgical procedure. Call volume has been consistent with

historical data overall, but there has been a rise in drug related calls. This, unfortunately, is a problem all over the state. The Chief reports that the officers are doing a great job in apprehending law breakers, but the remainder of the judicial process is out of their hands. The FY '24 car has been placed in service. Staffing has seen 1 loss and 1 new hire. Chief Dodge is considering requiring a General Knowledge Test & Physical Fitness Test for officer candidates, above what the Academy requires.

**CONSIDER ENERGY COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS:**

This item was postponed to a later date.

**ACCOUNTS PAYABLE:**

*On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Justin Bolduc, Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the accounts payable warrants for the week of January 9, 2024. Bob Nelson abstained.*

Paul White asked about the new audio video equipment with Teams, but the billing is still coming through for CVTV. There is still work to be done with the streams the Town provides to air. There may be other video recording and airing options that would be cost effective but may limit some types of audience, while expanding others.

Norma Malone asked about the IRS tax question. Accufund, our accounting software, is programmed with certain software, that would stop Social Security from being deducted at certain thresholds. There was an update for that limit and the program did not recognize it. It has been found and the affected employee will now be paying their portion of the tax.

**MISCELLANEOUS:**

Town Manager Chris Violette updated the Board on the following:

- The Manager handed out the Freeman, French, Freeman Scope and Fee Proposal for the Board to review. This item will be on the January 19 agenda. The Manager noted the proposal is intensive.
- The Manager shared that Town Engineer Josh Martineau is working with the engineers on the Camp Street project. They are hoping to have bid documents and engineer plans by the end of the month. Construction is hoping to begin by the middle of February.
- Mr. Violette reported that Barre Area Development met with himself and the City Manager for a kickoff meeting for the Strategic Plan. They are hoping to wrap this up before the end of June.

**ROUND TABLE:**

Paul White:

- Topper McFaun has been hearing from the residents at Valley View about their storm water project. Unfortunately, the Federal Government and ANR are the driving force behind the rules that concern the residents.
- The Recreation Board has been reviewing policies sent from the Board. Have any other departments started that? Chris Violette answered, yes.
- There is a residence on Route 14, just up from Pine Hill Road, where Chair White was wondering if zoning had received any complaints about. There have been no complaints.

Norma Malone:

- Audit – Katelyn Kran has not heard from the auditor. She is trying to prepare as best as she can.
- Town Report – Chris Violette wants to have the Town Report out before Town Meeting Day. He is trying to anticipate what questions may arise.

Justin Bolduc:

- Websterville Road potholes: the road is only on year four of a seven-year cycle. The increased traffic from the Route 110 detour is suspected of contributing to the premature failure of the pavement. If so, the Town may be able to get some assistance from AOT.

Mike Gilbar:

- Clark Road – Mike noticed two different plow trucks going by. This is because the Paved Route and Grave Route each have their own truck and overlap in certain areas.

**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 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 8:33 p.m. for personnel.*

*On a motion by Bob Nelson seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted unanimously to exit executive session at 9:59 p.m.*

**ADJOURN:**

*On a motion by Bob Nelson, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:59 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.

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