

**MINUTES – REGULAR SELECTBOARD MEETING
TOWN OF BARNET, VERMONT
MONDAY, JULY 25, 2016**

Meeting convened at 7:00 p.m. in the conference room of the Barnet Town Clerk’s Office.

Board members present: Chair Jeremy Roberts, Gary Bunnell, and Dylan Ford.

Others present: Road Foreman Mark Chase, Town Clerk Benjamin Heisholt, Zoning Administrative Officer Shirley Warden, and Dr. Richard Downer.

1. Consideration of approval of minutes of regular meeting held July 11, 2016

Mr. Bunnell moved to approve as presented the minutes of the special meeting held July 11, 2016.

Seconded by Ms. Ford and approved by voice vote.

2. Appearances by members of the public

There were no appearances by members of the public.

3. Appearance by Road Foreman Mark Chase regarding Highway Department matters

a. Gravel crushing commenced. Mr. Chase indicated that gravel crushing and hauling in the gravel pit has been started, and will continue for several weeks.

b. Sand screening finished. Mr. Chase indicated that 2016 sand screening and hauling has been completed.

c. Guardrails. Mr. Chase indicated that Vermont Recreational Surfacing and Fencing has been contracted to install guardrails on Barnet Center Road at the site of the recent box culvert installation, as well as on Cloud Brook Road and Little France Road.

d. Roadside mower progress. Mr. Chase reported that the Highway Department continues to run the roadside mower tractor to mow roadside grass and brush, but that the progress is slow. In order for the mower attachment to work effectively the tractor must be operated at very slow speeds. The Highway Department has investigated the problem and is working on a potential solution in the repair of blades and bars on the mower.

e. Rainstorms. Mr. Chase reported that the numerous brief downpours in recent weeks have created some work for the Highway Department in the removal of trees from roadways and repair of minor wash-outs.

f. Tower Road condition. In response to an inquiry from a taxpayer, Mr. Roberts asked Mr. Chase about the condition of the Class 4 portion of Tower Road. Discussion ensued.

g. De-paving trend. Ms. Ford discussed information she gleaned from a news media source about a national trend in favor of changing paved road surfaces to gravel road surfaces. Discussion ensued.

4. Consideration of waiver of penalty for late-filed Vermont Homestead Declarations

Mr. Heisholt presented information about the Board’s right to assess or not assess a penalty, as discussed at the previous meeting. Mr. Heisholt read the content of 32 V.S.A. § 5410(g), which indicates that the Selectboard “may...include a penalty of up to three percent of the education tax on the property” of an owner who files a homestead declaration on property that does not meet the criteria of a homestead or of an owner who fails to file a homestead declaration on a property that does meet the criteria of a homestead. This particular penalty is only applicable when the above-described taxpayer errors are not to the taxpayer’s advantage (i.e. when the homestead education rate is the lower of the two rates and the homestead owner fails to file a homestead declaration, or when the non-residential education rate is the lower of the two rates and the non-homestead owner files a homestead

declaration). In instances when the taxpayer error is to the taxpayer's advantage, the Selectboard may include a penalty of up to eight percent. Mr. Heisholt indicated that the Board has waived these penalties for the past several years. Mr. Heisholt presented mock tax bills that estimate the penalty on a \$200,000 property at eight percent (\$239.79), three percent (\$89.92), and one percent (\$29.97). Discussion ensued.

- Ms. Ford moved to waive the penalties allowable pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 5410(g) in 2016, but to apply these penalties in the maximum percentages allowable in 2017. Seconded by Mr. Bunnell and approved by voice vote.

5. Correspondence from Lincoln Applied Geology regarding application for Site Management Activity Completed designation for former Passumpsic Village Store

The Board reviewed an email and attached letter regarding the proposed application for Site Management Activity Completed designation. If granted, such designation would effectively close active monitoring of groundwater at the site. Discussion ensued.

6. Certification of 2016 property tax rates

The Board reviewed the certification of tax rates for 2016, as prepared by Treasurer Benjamin Heisholt. Total tax rate (including all municipal and education taxes) for homestead is to be 2.0892; and for non-residential 2.0452.

- The Board signed the certification.

7. Other business

a. Appearance by Dr. Richard Downer regarding beaver dams on Harvey's Lake channel.

Mr. Downer appeared to discuss his inspection and findings regarding beaver activity in the channel, as discussed at the previous Board meeting. He presented a written report regarding the same. On the day of this meeting, Dr. Downer found three beaver dams in the channel, each approximately 200 feet apart, beginning, following the flow of the channel from the lake, just north of the of the side channel entering from the west. Dr. Downer found that there is an elevation difference across the three dams of approximately five inches; the dams do not cause the lake level to be unduly high. The dams, two of which appear to be active, are also not causing any other particular problems at this time. Removing the stop logs at the Harvey's Lake Dam will not lower the lake under the current conditions, however. Discussion ensued.

- Mr. Bunnell noted that the Town has engaged trapper Melvin Nunn, who is actively trapping beavers in the channel.

b. Grants for dam project. Ms. Ford discussed her collaborative efforts with David Price of the Lake Harvey Association in pursuit of suitable grant funding for ongoing efforts towards a permanent solution for the Harvey Lake channel and dam. Discussion ensued.

c. Correspondence from Transfer Station & Recycling Center (TS/RC) Supervisor Bruce Marston regarding partial retirement. Mr. Roberts read a letter from Mr. Marston, which gives a brief synopsis of personnel activity at the TS/RC over the past several years, and indicates that Mr. Marston would like to retire from activities as a Recycling Center attendant, but retain an administrative and supervisory position. This would allow him to continue to schedule coverage for attendants, schedule pick-ups of dumpsters and recyclables, perform inventory, prepare the recycling building for business, etc. Mr. Marston proposes that such a reduced role would require approximately ten hours of work per month. Discussion ensued.

- The Board agreed to accept Mr. Marston's proposal of partial retirement and continued administrative and supervisory role.

8. Outstanding check warrants

The Board reviewed and approved all outstanding check warrants.

9. Adjournment

Mr. Bunnell moved to adjourn. Seconded by Ms. Ford and approved by voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

A true copy.

Attest: _____ *Town Clerk*