

MINUTES
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
TOWN OF BARNET, VERMONT
MARCH 7, 2017

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. at the Barnet Elementary School gymnasium by Moderator Dennis McLam. Mr. McLam announced that lunch would be served by the school cafeteria at approximately noon, and that the Annual School District Meeting would be held at 1:00 p.m. The Barnet Elementary School band played the National Anthem. Mr. McLam led the salute to the flag, then read the preamble of the warning.

ARTICLE 1. To elect a Moderator.

- Moderator stated that one-year term of Dennis McLam is expiring.
- Dennis McLam nominated by Marvin Bailey.
- Hearing no further nominations, Moderator announced that nominations would cease.
- Moderator instructed Town Clerk to cast one ballot for Dennis McLam.

ARTICLE 2. To elect all other Town Officers as required by law and additional Town Officers as approved by the voters.

Selectboard

- Moderator stated that the three-year term of Dylan Ford is expiring.
- Dylan Ford nominated by William Biddle.
- Theodore Faris nominated by Marvin Bailey.
- Hearing no further nominations, Moderator announced that nominations would cease.
- Dylan Ford spoke: I am interested in re-election because of love of Barnet, which means love of the people of Barnet. As such, my task is to represent all voices in Barnet, and do what is best for all: laying aside personal feelings and agendas. In the past three years as Selectboard Member, I have helped apply for an Aquatic Nuisance Control Grant to help with the cost of the boat wash program at Harvey's Lake, and coordinated a meeting with various stakeholders regarding the Harvey's Lake Dam. I am currently working on a grant for a solution to the problems at the outlet from the lake, and working with the Building Committee on a solution for new municipal offices. I am is available and easily found in various places in town.
- Theodore Faris spoke: I have been on Selectboard before: most voters know what I have done. I run a business in Barnet, and work with businesses in Barnet. Barnet is a good town, but it needs to be run with common sense and be a good place to live for all residents.
- Moderator stated that a ballot is required for this office. Paper ballots were then distributed and a paper ballot vote conducted. The paper ballots were tabulated by the Justices of the Peace as members of the Board of Civil Authority.
- Moderator announced the results of the paper ballot vote:
 - 258 total votes
 - 130 votes required to be elected

- Theodore Faris: 84 votes
- Dylan Ford: 174 votes
- Moderator announced that Dylan Ford is elected

Lister

- Moderator stated that the three-year term of Sarah Cook is expiring.
- Sarah Cook nominated by John Cook.
- Hearing no further nominations, Moderator announced that nominations would cease.
- Moderator instructed Town Clerk to cast one ballot for Sarah Cook.

Auditor

- Moderator stated that the three-year term of Benjamin Gates is expiring.
- Benjamin Gates nominated by Mona Marceau.
- Hearing no further nominations, Moderator announced that nominations would cease.
- Moderator instructed Town Clerk to cast one ballot for Benjamin Gates.

Auditor

- Moderator stated that this office is vacant, having one year remaining of a three-year term. Jonathan Smires, who held this office, resigned and no replacement was appointed.
- Shellie Samuels nominated by Mona Marceau.
 - Shellie Samuels declined the nomination.
- Rachel Siegel nominated by Roseann Leute.
 - Rachel Siegel declined the nomination.
- Carrie Dunbar nominated by Ronald Morse.
- Mona Marceau moved that nominations cease. Seconded. Approved by voice vote.
- Moderator instructed Town Clerk to cast one ballot for Carrie Dunbar.

Collector of Delinquent Tax

- Moderator stated that the one-year term of Lisa Bowden is expiring.
- Lisa Bowden nominated by Mark Gilleland.
- Hearing no further nominations, Moderator announced that nominations would cease.
- Moderator instructed Town Clerk to cast one ballot for Lisa Bowden.

First Constable

- Moderator stated that the two-year term of Steve Mosher is expiring.
- Steve Mosher nominated by David Stevenson.
- Hearing no further nominations, Moderator announced that nominations would cease.
- Moderator instructed Town Clerk to cast one ballot for Steve Mosher.

Second Constable

- Moderator stated that the two-year term of David Stevenson is expiring.

- David Stevenson nominated by William Biddle.
- Hearing no further nominations, Moderator announced that nominations would cease.
- Moderator instructed Town Clerk to cast one ballot for David Stevenson.

Grand Juror

- Moderator stated that the one-year term of David Willis is expiring.
- David Willis nominated by Dorothy Robinson.
- Hearing no further nominations, Moderator announced that nominations would cease.
- Moderator instructed Town Clerk to cast one ballot for David Willis.

Town Agent

- Moderator stated that one-year term of Steven Adler expiring.
- Steven Adler nominated by Mona Marceau.
- Hearing no further nominations, Moderator announced that nominations would cease.
- Moderator instructed Town Clerk to cast one ballot for Steven Adler.

Trustee of Public Funds

- Moderator stated that three-year term of Merle Fitzgerald is expiring.
- Merle Fitzgerald nominated David Warden.
- Hearing no further nominations, Moderator announced that nominations would cease.
- Moderator instructed Town Clerk to cast one ballot for Merle Fitzgerald.

Library Trustee

- Moderator stated that five-year term of Heather Counter is expiring.
- Susan Wood nominated by Susan Roberts.
- Hearing no further nominations, Moderator announced that nominations would cease.
- Moderator instructed Town Clerk to cast one ballot for Susan Wood.

Library Trustee

- Moderator stated that this office is vacant, having two years remaining of a five-year term. Mary Holley, who held this office, resigned and no replacement was appointed.
- Laurajean Stewart nominated by Jane Casavant.
- Rebecca Boardman nominated by Sherry Tolle.
- Mona Marceau moved that nominations cease. Seconded and approved by voice vote.
- Laurajean Stewart and Rebecca Boardman each spoke regarding her candidacy, each discussing her own willingness to serve, and the other candidate's qualifications to serve.
- A show-of-hands vote was taken by the Moderator, with Rebecca Boardman receiving a majority of the votes.
- Moderator instructed Town Clerk to cast one ballot for Rebecca Boardman.

ARTICLE 3. To consider and act upon the report of the Town Auditors.

- Dennis Kauppila moved to accept the report of the Town Auditors as it appears on page twenty-seven of the Town Report. Seconded by Mona Marceau.
- Marvin Bailey asked why a portion of page 20 of the Town Report, a copy of the 2016 Town Meeting minutes, was omitted.
 - The Selectboard responded that this section was omitted due to a printing error, and that the minutes are available for review at the Town Clerk's Office.
- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 4. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of Two Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$250.00) to the American Red Cross of Vermont & the New Hampshire Upper Valley Region?

- Susan Persson moved the article as warned. Seconded by Mona Marceau.
- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 5. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of One Thousand Dollars (\$1,00.00) to the Barnet Historical Society to be used for maintaining the Goodwillie House?

- David Warden moved the article as warned. Seconded by Joseph Breidenstein.
- Roseann Leute, a member of the Barnet Historical Society, spoke: Townspeople are encouraged to visit the Goodwillie House, which is the oldest house in town. The historical society is making improvements to the building, archival improvements for artifacts, and showing new displays.
- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 6. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) to the Barnet Historical Society to be used for conservation and preservation of collections of historical materials associated with the township of Barnet?

- David Warden moved the article as warned. Seconded by Mona Marceau.
- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 7. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of Two Thousand Three Hundred Dollars (\$2,300.00) to Caledonia Home Health Care & Hospice?

- Celina Wright moved the article as warned. Seconded by Kaye Breidenstein.
- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 8. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of Twenty-Four Thousand Seven Hundred Twenty-Three Dollars (\$24,723.00) to CALEX Ambulance Service?

- Susan Persson moved the article as warned. Seconded by John Cook.
- Celina Wright, Representative of CALEX, spoke: The appropriation request to Barnet is based on \$14.50 per capita, which is the same rate requested from all Vermont towns that CALEX services.
- Shirley Warden spoke: The increase in request from 2016 to 2017 seems exorbitant.
 - Celina Wright responded: The Selectboard requested that CALEX make more frequent requests for smaller increases, such as Ms. Warden suggests. Increasing the

request, however, requires a significant effort by CALEX's volunteer staff to collect signatures for petitions. CALEX recommends that the Town incorporate the appropriation into the Selectboard budget to alleviate this problem.

- Joseph Breidenstein spoke in favor of the appropriation: If not for CALEX, I would not be here today.
- Richard Gilmour spoke: Why is Caledonia Home Health Care & Hospice so much less expensive per trip than CALEX, considering that the two provide similar services? Also, what is the total budget of CALEX?
 - Celina Wright responded: The total budget is just over \$2 million in revenues. Government insurance pays a flat amount per service, regardless of what CALEX charges or what the service actually costs. The services provided by CALEX and Caledonia Home Health Care & Hospice are very different: Home Health's patients are scheduled, whereas the bulk of CALEX's budget consists of having staff on duty and ready to respond twenty-four hours a day.
- Richard Gilmour spoke: The Town of Barnet should consider investing in its own ambulance service.
- Ronald Morse spoke: The cost for each service is higher for CALEX because they do not charge for all calls: only for those resulting in a transport.
- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 9. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) to Catamount Arts?

- William Biddle moved the article as warned. Seconded by Mona Marceau.
- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 10. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of One Thousand Seven Hundred Dollars (\$1,700.00) to Fairbanks Museum and Planetarium?

- Merle Fitzgerald moved the article as warned. Seconded by Mona Marceau.
- Robert Farlice-Rubio spoke: The Fairbanks Museum and Planetarium thanks the voters of Barnet for their support in 2016. The appropriation entitles all Barnet residents to free admission to the museum.
- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 11. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) to Kingdom Animal Shelter?

- Mona Marceau moved the article as warned. Seconded by Joseph Breidenstein.
- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 12. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of Seventeen Thousand Dollars (\$17,000) to the Lake Harvey Association to be used for a boat monitoring/wash program dedicated to the prevention of milfoil and other invasive species at Harvey's Lake?

- Joseph Breidenstein moved the article as warned. Seconded by Thomas Flanagan.
- Joyce Evans asked how this appropriation will be effected by the grant for which the Town has applied to be used towards the boat monitoring/wash program.
- Steven Adler, representative of the Lake Harvey Association, spoke: The Town has applied for an Aquatic Nuisance Control grant. If approved, the grant would cover approximately half (\$8,500) of the total cost of the payroll for the program. The grant is a

municipal grant, so the Town would receive any funding gained thereby. It would not effect this appropriation whether the grant is approved or not, but if the grant is approved the effect of the increase in appropriation and the grant revenue would offset each other. The Town pays this appropriation through administration of the payroll associated with the program, meaning that the program employees are Town of Barnet employees. At the end of the season the Town bills the Lake Harvey Association for any expenditure in excess of the appropriation. The Selectboard has recognized the lake as a major asset to the Town and has therefore allowed this increased appropriation request without a petition. It is crucial that this program continue and expand because it is much less expensive to prevent invasive species than it is to attempt to control them once they have arrived.

- Werner Kohnke asked if any monitoring of the lake is done below the surface of the water.
 - Steven Adler responded: There is some monitoring done by property owners on the lake, but this appropriation is for the boat monitoring /wash program only.
 - Jacqueline Sprague spoke: Volunteers collect water samples to send to the State of Vermont for testing; others monitor submarine flora for invasive species.
- David Kristoff spoke: Is a fee assessed to boaters to offset the cost of the program?
 - Steven Adler responded: No fee is charged, as the lake is State waters and the State of Vermont does not allow the program to charge a fee. Also, boats access the lake from other points, where fees could not be assessed.
- Joyce Evans asked about safeguards against invasive species entering the lake at other points of entry, and about the equity of requiring all boaters except lake property owners to submit to boat monitoring.
 - Steven Adler responded: The Lake Harvey Association has worked with the Beach Committee to prevent boats from entering the lake from the public beach. The Lake Harvey Association makes great efforts to ensure that members comply with best practices to prevent invasive species.
- Dylan Ford spoke: The Town is encouraged to apply for the Aquatic Nuisance Control grant annually; the Lake Harvey Association hopes to leverage this funding to expand the program, including the possibility of future investment in divers to monitoring the growth of submarine flora.
- Thomas Melton moved to amend the motion to deny the appropriation until the result of the grant application is known. Seconded by David Kristoff.
 - Steven Adler spoke: The Lake Harvey Association approaches this appropriation as a request for the Town to pay the payroll for the Town employees employed at the boat wash station. Nobody in town has control of the grant approval process. Even if the grant is not approved, the boat wash/monitoring program is a bargain for the voters and taxpayers, compared with the costs of not preventing invasive species.
 - The amendment failed by voice vote.
- The original motion was passed by voice vote.
- Jeremy Roberts spoke: The Lake Harvey Association has approached the Selectboard with a proposal that the boat wash/monitoring program be incorporated into the Town budget, rather than voted as a special appropriation. Is this a change the voters would support?
 - The Moderator ruled discussion regarding this topic to be out of order at this time.

ARTICLE 13. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of One Thousand Dollars

(\$1,000.00) to Northeast Kingdom Council on Aging?

- Mona Marceau moved the article as warned. Seconded by Joseph Breidenstein.
- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 14. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of One Thousand Seven Hundred Seventy-Five Dollars (\$1,775.00) to Northeast Kingdom Human Services, Inc.?

- Mona Marceau moved the article as warned. Seconded by Joseph Breidenstein.
- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 15. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of Three Hundred Dollars (\$300.00) to Northeast Kingdom Learning Services, Inc.?

- Mona Marceau moved the article as warned. Seconded by Dorothy Robinson.
- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 16. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) to Northeast Kingdom Youth Services?

- Mona Marceau moved the article as warned. Seconded by Dorothy Robinson.
- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 17. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of One Thousand One Hundred Dollars (\$1,100.00) to Rural Community Transportation?

- Mona Marceau moved the article as warned. Seconded by Thomas Flanagan.
- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 18. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of One Thousand Two Hundred Dollars (\$1,200.00) to Umbrella Inc.?

- Jay Sprout moved the article as warned. Seconded by Shellie Samuels.
- Joyce Evans asked if it is possible to know how many Barnet residents were served by Umbrella in 2016, considering that Umbrella serves anonymous clients.
 - Emily Bishop, who is an after-hours advocate for the program, spoke in support of the appropriation, stating that it helps to provide a safer environment for children and families.
- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 19. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of Two Hundred Eighty Dollars (\$280.00) to the Vermont Center for Independent Living?

- Susan Persson moved the article as warned. Seconded by Shellie Samuels.
- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 20. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of Three Thousand Dollars (\$4,000.00) to the West Barnet Senior Meal Site?

- The Moderator noted that there is a printing error in the warning, which indicates two different dollar amounts; the correct amount is \$4,000.
- Marvin Bailey moved to appropriate the sum of \$4,000 to West Barnet Senior Meal Site. Seconded by John Cook.
- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 21. To see what arrangements the Town and Town School District will vote for the collection of its taxes and by what lawful official for the ensuing year.

- Lisa Bowden moved that taxes become due and payable in hand to the Town Treasurer during business hours on or before October 21, 2017, with said taxes to be actually received by said Treasurer on or before the due date without regard to postmark; and thereafter said taxes shall be payable to the Collector of Delinquent Tax with interest at the rate of 1% per month or fraction thereof, for the first three months, and thereafter at the rate of 1 ½ % per month or fraction thereof, plus the collector's fee of 8% as provided by law. Seconded by Mona Marceau.
- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 22. To see what sum of money the Town will vote to raise to defray the expenses and liabilities of the Town for the current year.

- Jeremy Roberts moved to raise the sum of \$1,467,150.16 for the General Fund budget. Seconded by Mona Marceau.
- Jeremy Roberts noted that his motion includes increases in appropriations from 2016 to 2017 for articles 8, 12, and 18. These account for the increase of \$15,473 over the sum listed as "Selectboard Budget Tax Appropriation" on page 49 of the Town Report.
- Jeremy Roberts spoke about major activities of the Selectboard in 2016, as discussed on page 26 of the Town Report.
- Marvin Bailey asked if the Building Committee has looked into the possibility of using the former McIndoe Falls schoolhouse as a location for new municipal offices.
 - Dylan Ford spoke: This property was sold at tax sale in late 2016. The owner has one year to redeem the property; otherwise the property will be conveyed to the highest bidder at the tax sale auction, Charles Somers.
- Mona Marceau asked if there is a statutory limit on how long a taxpayer can be delinquent on property taxes before a tax sale is conducted.
 - Lisa Bowden responded: There is no statutory limit, but my policies will not allow a taxpayer to be many years delinquent.
- David Warden spoke: Something needs to be done immediately about some of the delinquent taxes listed in the Town Report.
- Jay Sprout spoke: I appeared before the Selectboard in January to ask about the functions of the fire districts and the cost of electricity for street lights and maintenance of sidewalks. These two expenses are public utilities and should be included in the town budget so that the costs are fairly shared by all taxpayers. If these are the only functions of any fire district, there is no reason for these fire districts to continue to exist. Fire districts operating a water utility, if this be their only remaining function, should conduct their business under a name more in keeping with its function than "fire district." The Selectboard agreed to inquire into the legalities of dissolving fire districts or absorbing their functions into the municipality; it would be appropriate for this meeting to pass an advisory resolution to support the review of the function of fire districts with the goal of equitable taxation for public utilities and streamlining this level of bureaucracy if any fire district serves no other purpose. I paid over \$200 in fire district taxes in 2016: this is not a trivial matter.
 - Marvin Bailey spoke: There is difficulty in filling fire district offices in East Barnet due to small population: the town should take over this fire district.
 - David Warden spoke: Street lights will not be installed in rural areas: taxing all Barnet taxpayers is inequitable.

- Ronald Morse spoke: Finding individuals to serve in fire district offices is difficult. It would be possible for the town to set up a special tax rate for fire district taxpayers, which would allow the continuation of the status quo with regard to taxes, but alleviate the bureaucratic burden on small village populations.
- Werner Kohnke spoke: There are Vermont statutes that spell out the function and role of fire districts. Every village is unique: widespread changes should not be made.
- Roseann Leute spoke: West Barnet needs to have sidewalks. Everybody uses streetlights, not just village residents.
- A straw poll was taken by the Moderator on whether to review dissolving fire districts or keep the status quo with regard to fire districts. A show of hands vote favored keeping the status quo.
- Jeremy Roberts' motion regarding the General Fund budget was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 23. To transact any other business that may legally come before the meeting.

- Robert Farlice-Rubio spoke about an Extended Learning Opportunities raffle.
- State Representative Marcia Martel (a non-voter) spoke, with the voters' permission, regarding legislative matters, and answered several voter questions.
- State Representative Scott Beck (a non-voter) spoke, with the voters' permission, regarding legislative matters, and answered several voter questions.
- Caroline DeMaio spoke about Green Up Day.
- Mona Marceau discussed the town-wide reappraisal referenced in the Listers Report on page 28 of the Town Report, asking if it will cause property taxes to decrease.
 - The Moderator responded: The same amount of taxes will likely be raised, so regardless of grand list value decreases individual tax bills will remain relatively stable.
- Grace Gershuny spoke about a forthcoming ad hoc community resilience committee.
- Roseann Leute spoke about a Grange Hall event.
- Sarah Ball spoke about the reorganization of the Barnet Auxiliary in support of Barnet Fire & Rescue.
- Lisa Bowden spoke in reference to the discussion about fire districts, indicating that a tax rate increase in Barnet Village was thoroughly explained to taxpayers, and encouraging younger citizens to get involved in the fire districts.
- Jeremy Roberts spoke: In 2017 the Selectboard will assess fees at the maximum amounts allowed by statute for late-filed Vermont Homestead Declarations.
- Moderator Dennis McLam adjourned the meeting at 12:20 p.m.

Dennis McLam, Moderator

Jeremy Roberts, Selectboard Chair

Attest: Benjamin Heisholt, Town Clerk