

**MINUTES
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
TOWN OF BARNET, VERMONT
MARCH 6, 2018**

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. at the Barnet Elementary School gymnasium by Moderator Dennis McLam. The Barnet Elementary School band played the National Anthem. Mr. McLam led the salute to the flag, then read the preamble of the warning.

The legal voters of the Town of Barnet, Vermont are hereby notified and warned to meet at the Barnet School on Tuesday, March 6, 2018 at 10 o'clock in the forenoon to act on the following Articles:

ARTICLE 1. To elect a Moderator.

- Moderator stated that one-year term of Dennis McLam is expiring.
- Dennis McLam nominated by Mark Bowen.
- William Biddle moved that nominations ceased. Seconded. Approved by voice vote.
- 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 Gary Bunnell is expiring.
- Benjamin Gates nominated by Gary Bunnell.
- Hearing no further nominations, Moderator announced that nominations would cease.
- Moderator instructed Town Clerk to cast one ballot for Benjamin Gates.
- Jeremy Roberts spoke, thanking Gary Bunnell for his service as Selectboard Member. Mr. Roberts described Mr. Bunnell as a “silent leader,” always leading by example and hard work. He was particularly invaluable in his role as Road Commissioner, where he put his expertise to good work, and was always available to assist, advise, and give direction.

Town Clerk & Treasurer

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

Lister

- Moderator stated that the three-year term of Christen Emerson is expiring. Moderator stated that Ms. Emerson has indicated that she does not seek re-election.
- Michael Walsh nominated.
- Hearing no further nominations, Moderator announced that nominations would cease.
- Moderator instructed Town Clerk to cast one ballot for Michael Walsh.

Auditor

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

Auditor

- Moderator stated Benjamin Gates must vacate his office as Auditor, having been elected as Selectboard Member, as the two offices would conflict and cannot be

held by the same individual. There are two years remaining on Mr. Gates's three-year term.

- Joseph Breidenstein nominated by Kaye Breidenstein.
- Hearing no further nominations, Moderator announced that nominations would cease.
- Moderator instructed Town Clerk to cast one ballot for Kaye Breidenstein.

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.

Grand Juror

- Moderator stated that the one-year term of David Willis is expiring.
- David Willis nominated by Mark Bowen.
- 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 William Biddle.
- 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 William Hoar is expiring.
- Diane Thompson nominated William Graves.
- Hearing no further nominations, Moderator announced that nominations would cease.
- Moderator instructed Town Clerk to cast one ballot for Diane Thompson.

Library Trustee

- Moderator stated that five-year term of Julie Roos is expiring.
- Julie Roos nominated by Rebecca Boardman.
- Hearing no further nominations, Moderator announced that nominations would cease.
- Moderator instructed Town Clerk to cast one ballot for Julie Roos.

Library Trustee

- Moderator stated that this office has three years remaining of a five-year term. Jane Casavant, who held this office, resigned and Ashley Wright was appointed to replace her.
- Ashley Wright nominated by Rebecca Boardman.
- Hearing no further nominations, Moderator announced that nominations would cease.
- Moderator instructed Town Clerk to cast one ballot for Ashley Wright.

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

- Mona Marceau moved to accept the report of the Town Auditors as it appears on page thirty-two of the Town Report. Seconded by Susan Persson.
- 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?

- Mark Bowen moved the article as warned. Seconded by Sherry Tolle.
- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 5. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) to the Barnet Historical Society to be used for maintaining the Goodwillie House?

- Kathleen Monroe moved the article as warned. Seconded by Nancy Bishop.
- 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?

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

The Moderator allowed a brief intermission in the meeting for Vermont legislators Marcia Martel and Scott Beck to speak regarding various recent actions and potential future actions of the legislature. With the voters' approval non-voters Ms. Martel and Mr. Beck were allowed to speak. The legislators' presentations included discussion regarding a marijuana bill, a gun safety bill, and education funding law. Discussion followed regarding education funding, Act 46, and school mergers.

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?

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

ARTICLE 8. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of Twenty-Six Thousand Four Hundred Twenty-Eight Dollars (\$26,428.00) to CALEX Ambulance Service?

- Michael Walsh moved the article as warned. Seconded by Mona Marceau.
- Mona Marceau asked how CALEX Ambulance Service arrived at their appropriation request amount.
- Celina Wright, Representative of CALEX, spoke, referring to a CALEX document made available publicly: CALEX has two sources of revenues and costs – responding to 911 calls and transferring patients from hospital to hospital. CALEX is asking for increased town appropriations because 911 response revenues do not cover 911 costs. The increase in appropriation request in 2018 calculates to \$1.00 per capita for member towns; this funding will cover the cost of 911 to ensure response readiness. In order for towns to completely cover the cost of 911, the per capita rate would be \$20.00; the 2018 appropriation request calculates to \$15.50 per capita. Their plan is to increase the per capita rate for the next two years to achieve \$20.00 per capita in 2020. Even at \$20.00 per capita CALEX is the lowest cost EMS service in the State of Vermont.
- Lisa Bowden asked if there are costs for CALEX to participate in the 911 system.
 - Ms. Wright indicated that CALEX does pay dispatch service fees.
- Mona Marceau asked how CALEX can operate without being profitable with its 911 operation.
 - Ms. Wright indicated that CALEX is able to offset 911 operation losses with gains from its transport service.
- Gail Warnaar spoke in support of CALEX, stating that it is a good service and should not be allowed to diminish.
- Mary Jean Thielen spoke in support of CALEX, praising their staff, and stating that the service is a good investment.
- 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?

- Mark Bowen 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?

- Susan Persson moved the article as warned. Seconded by Mona Marceau.
- Donald Easter moved to amend the motion to appropriate the sum of \$2,000. Seconded.
- Robert Farlice-Rubio spoke: The Fairbanks Museum and Planetarium thanks the voters

of Barnet for their support. The appropriation entitles all Barnet residents to free admission to the museum.

- Mr. Easter's motion to amend the original motion was passed by voice vote.
- Amended 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?

- Sherry Tolle moved the article as warned. Seconded by Susan Persson.
- Mona Marceau asked if Kingdom Animal Shelter takes in dogs, or only cats.
 - A Kingdom Animal Shelter board member indicated that the Shelter intends to take cats and dogs, but currently has sufficient physical infrastructure and volunteer staff only for cats.
- Laurajean Stewart spoke in support of the appropriation, stating that Kingdom Animal Shelter provides a valuable resource at a time when placement of homeless or misplaced animals is difficult.
- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 12. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) to Northeast Kingdom Council on Aging?

- Sherry Tolle moved the article as warned. Seconded by Patricia McLam.
- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 13. 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.
- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 14. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of Three Hundred Dollars (\$300.00) to Northeast Kingdom Learning Services, Inc.?

- Sherry Tolle moved the article as warned. Seconded.
- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 15. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) to Northeast Kingdom Youth Services?

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

ARTICLE 16. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of One Thousand One Hundred Dollars (\$1,100.00) to Rural Community Transportation?

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

ARTICLE 17. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of One Thousand Two Hundred Dollars (\$1,200.00) to Umbrella Inc.?

- Sherry Tolle moved the article as warned. Seconded by Patricia McLam.
- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 18. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of Two Hundred Eighty Dollars (\$280.00) to the Vermont Center for Independent Living?

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

ARTICLE 19. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of Four Thousand Dollars (\$4,000.00) to the West Barnet Senior Meal Site?

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

ARTICLE 20. Shall the Town of Barnet include an appropriation for CALEX Ambulance Service, or any other ambulance service, in such amounts and for such periods as the Town Selectboard may from time to time negotiate, in the town's budget starting in the fiscal year 2019?

- Sherry Tolle moved the article as warned. Seconded by Mark Bowen.

- Mona Marceau asked why this article is on the warning.
 - Celina Wright, Representative of CALEX, indicated that the Selectboard wished to obtain the voters' opinions on this issue.
- Michael Wright, CALEX Chief, spoke: CALEX is attempting to budget for a three-year period, and a contract arrangement would allow for more certainty with regard to budgeting. Ambulance is an essential service to support public safety, more analogous to the Highway Department than it is to the charitable and social service organizations receiving special appropriations. The Town has always approved CALEX's appropriation in the past, and it is not clear what the outcome would be if the appropriation was not approved.
- Michael Walsh asked if the proposed contract arrangement would replace the current special appropriation model.
 - Michael Wright indicated that a contract arrangement would replace the special appropriation.
- Michael Wright spoke: The proposed contract includes first aid training for Town employees. CALEX works closely with the Barnet Fire & Rescue Department, and replenishes rescue equipment used by the Barnet Fire & Rescue.
- Mona Marceau moved to amend the motion to change the word "appropriation" to "contract." Seconded by Dakota Butterfield.
- Selectboard member Jeremy Roberts spoke: The Selectboard brought this issue to the voters to allow them to decide if they wish to this long-standing appropriation relationship. The Selectboard would like to negotiate a contract with the voters' approval.
- Some discussion was had about proposed annual payment increases in the proposed contract arrangement.
- Michael Wright re-iterated comments made under Article 8 above: CALEX intends to increase per capita funding to \$20.00 by 2020.
- Michael Walsh spoke: In addition to normal rescue and transport service, CALEX also provides paramedic services at fires to which that Barnet Fire & Rescue reports. There should be a publicly stated cap on annual contract costs.
 - Selectboard member Jeremy Roberts spoke: All Selectboard meetings are public; the Selectboard invites public participation during discussions regarding contract costs, and approval of budgets.
- Mona Marceau asked if the situation regarding the ambulance service in Littleton, New Hampshire affects the per capita cost of the service in Barnet.
 - Michael Wright spoke: The situation in Littleton did not affect Barnet. Littleton's service turned out to be much different than service in Vermont towns. There were many more no-transport calls, and other difficulties resulting in higher costs for the public.
- Town Agent Steven Adler spoke: Passage of this article would encourage the Selectboard to negotiate a contract arrangement, but would not require them to do so. The Selectboard does hope to be able to negotiate a contract.
- Jael Luomala asked what would happen if the Selectboard decides not to enter a contract.
 - Selectboard member Jeremy Roberts spoke: If a contract is not entered, CALEX would need to again request an appropriation.
- The amendment moved by Mona Marceau, to change the word "appropriation" to the word "contract," was passed by voice vote.
- The amended 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 20, 2018, 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 Sherry Tolle.
- School Director Louis Bushey spoke: It should be recognized that in this article "Town School District" is actually represented by the Caledonia Cooperative School District, not the Barnet School District. Property taxes will be collected by the town Treasurer for the former entity, rather than the latter, in the forthcoming tax collection season.
- 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.

- Selectboard member Jeremy Roberts moved to raise the sum of \$1,509,380.01 for the General Fund budget. Seconded by Susan Persson.
- Jeremy Roberts spoke: The Selectboard focused on road paving in this 2018 budget. A substantial sum is budgeted for this line item, and a number of projects will be targeted. The Selectboard continues look toward improvements in the areas of culvert repairs and upgrades, and maintenance and repair of bridges. Other areas of focus of the Selectboard in the past year have been: cooperation with the Building Committee in moving toward a solution for improved municipal office space, and improving the watershed of Harvey's Lake, Stevens River, and South Peacham Brook through possible changes to the Harvey's Lake Dam, etc.
- Dakota Butterfield asked if there is a budget line item relating to the proposed improved municipal office space.
 - Dylan Ford responded: There is an annual appropriation to the Buildings Fund in the amount of \$50,000. Appropriations to this fund may be used for the proposed municipal building project. There is an upcoming "all-funders" meeting at which the Building Committee hopes to obtain some answers to questions relating to possible funding sources external to the Town. Later this year the Building Committee hopes to move toward an informational hearing and a town-wide vote on the issue.
- Mark Bowen asked if, at the proposed town-wide vote, the voters would be presented with options other than the McIndoe Falls Academy renovation proposal.
 - Selectboard member Dylan Ford spoke: The eleven-member Building Committee has been working for two and a half years on evaluating the various options for remodeling various buildings or new construction. The Committee determined that the McIndoe Falls Academy option was worth investigating, and with the Selectboard's approval conducted a feasibility study. The Committee also, with the Selectboard's approval hired an independent study of costs for construction of a new building on an unknown site. The latter study considered a building with less extensive community functions than the McIndoe Fall Academy proposal. The Committee intends to allow the voters to determine ultimately which of these possibilities is best.
- Jay Sprout spoke about the matter of electric bills paid by village residents for street lights. He argued that the street lights are an essential service available to all residents and taxpayers, not just village residents, and that the Town should therefore incorporate this expense into its General Fund budget.
 - Moderator stated he was inclined rule the proposed amendment out of order, since it was not warned.
 - Mr. Sprout argued that an amendment to the budget, to increase or decrease the total funds raised, would be appropriate without a warning.
 - Laurajean Stewart spoke: The Barnet Village post office is open twenty-four hours each day, accessed by many residents from outside the village, and relies on street lights for safe access. Street lights support the whole community.
 - Town Agent Steven Adler spoke: The Selectboard is required to set a budget, which the voters can alter in terms of total funds appropriated, but not in terms of individual budget line items. A vote of the kind suggested by Mr. Sprout would be advisory only, and not binding.
- Mona Marceau moved to call the question.
- Jeremy Roberts's motion to raise the sum of \$1,509,380.01 for the General Fund budget passed by voice vote.

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

- Jay Sprout moved to advise the Selectboard to investigate the cost of operating the street lights and sidewalks throughout the Town, and consider incorporating these costs in the General Fund budget in 2019. Seconded.
 - Theodore Faris spoke: The voters should keep in mind that several of the fire districts operate water systems. The motion on the floor does not consider the incorporation of these systems into the Town budget.
 - Mr. Sprout's motion was passed by a show-of-hands vote: 39 in favor, 24 opposed.
- Lister John Cook spoke: In 2018 the Listers, with a real estate appraisal firm, will commence a town-wide reappraisal of all properties in Barnet, with the exception of the two hydroelectric dam properties owned by Great River Hydro LLC. Property owners

will be notified by phone or mail when the Listers or the appraisal firm plan to visit their properties. The Listers request that owners contact the Listers to advise of their telephone numbers. The reappraisal is scheduled to be completed in 2020.

- Caroline DeMaio spoke regarding Green Up Day, which is on Saturday, May 5, 2018.
- Howard Gaston spoke, stating that a Barnet voter, who was unable to attend this meeting, asked him to comment urging voters to consider changing the time of the annual meeting to the evening.
- Selectboard member Jeremy Roberts spoke: The Selectboard will be assessing fees in the maximum amount allowable by law for late-filed Homestead Declarations. Also, there are a number of vacant seats in town office positions, including the Planning Commission/Zoning Board, and in the various fire districts.
- James Pircher spoke: A group of Barnet residents are forming a second amendment study group. Interested persons are encouraged to seek information from Mr. Pircher after this meeting.
- Christin Emerson spoke: There are currently two vacant positions on the Beach Committee.
- Shawn Larocque spoke, thanking the Town for dedicating the town report to his father, Leigh Larocque.
- Mona Marceau asked when Zoning Bylaws will be complete.
 - The Moderator, Dennis McLam, who is also the Zoning Board Chair, stated that the Bylaws are progressing towards adoption, and may be in effect by fall 2018.
- Meeting adjourned 12:03 p.m.

Dennis McLam, Moderator

Jeremy Roberts, Selectboard Chair

Attest: Benjamin Heisholt, Town Clerk