

**MINUTES – REGULAR SELECTBOARD MEETING  
TOWN OF BARNET, VERMONT  
MONDAY, JANUARY 28, 2019**

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

**Board members present:** Jeremy Roberts, Dylan Ford, and Benjamin Gates.

**Other Town Officials and employees present:** Town Clerk Benjamin Heisholt.

**Members of the public present:** Jonathan Carpenter and Laura Goldberg.

**1. Consideration of approval of minutes of special meeting held January 21, 2019**

- Mr. Gates moved approve as presented the minutes of the special meeting held January 21, 2019. Seconded by Ms. Ford and approved by voice vote.

**2. Appearances by members of the public**

- a. Resident Laura Goldberg regarding snow plowing on Carter Street.** Ms. Goldberg appeared to request an update from the Board regarding plowing practices on Carter Street. Ms. Goldberg said that the Board had previously agreed to plow the road using a smaller truck with adjustable angle plow, to avoid depositing large piles of snow in driveways.
- The Board agreed that Mr. Roberts will speak to Road Foreman Mark Chase about the possibility of making this change, and any logistical challenges it may entail.

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

Mr. Chase did not appear at this meeting, but the Board did discuss several matters pertaining to the Highway Department.

- a. Correspondence from Vermont Department of Motor Vehicles regarding reporting of special weight limits for highways and bridges.** The Board reviewed a letter and attached instructions regarding the Town’s annual obligation to report special weight limits for highways and bridges. Discussion ensued.

- Mr. Gates moved to report the same special weight limits in 2019 as were reported in 2018. Seconded by Ms. Ford and approved by voice vote.

**b. Other business.**

- i. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Emergency Relief Funds.** The Board reviewed documentation of reimbursable damages resulting from July 2017 flooding on Comerford Dam Road, West Barnet Road, and West Main Street. These federal highways are covered for emergency funding through FHWA rather than Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Total anticipated payment from FHWA is \$70,878.43.

- The Board signed the cost authorization form.

**4. Consideration of approval of 2019 Town Meeting warning**

The Board reviewed a proposed warning for the 2019 town meeting. This warning is, in most respects, identical to the warning for the 2018 meeting. Differences from the 2018 warning include:

- There is no article for an appropriation to CALEX Ambulance Service, because the Selectboard now contracts for ambulance services.
- There is an additional article, added with the receipt of a valid petition: “Shall the Town of Barnet vote to raise, and appropriate the sum of \$50,000 to be used by the five fire districts

within the Town of Barnet? Dispersal of funds will be up to the discretion of the Selectboard in the form of a grant.”

- There is another additional article, added by action of the Board, at the request of Lakeview Grange: “Shall the Town vote to exempt from taxation the property owned by Lakeview Grange #359 located in West Barnet Village, for a period not to exceed 5 years, pursuant to 32 VSA §3840?”

Discussion ensued.

- Mr. Gates moved to approve the warning as presented. Seconded by Ms. Ford and approved by voice vote. The Board signed the warning.

## **5. Consideration of bids for 2019 tax anticipation note**

The Board reviewed bids for tax anticipation borrowing for calendar year 2019. Bids received are summarized below.

	<b>Loan Amount</b>	<b>Loan Rate</b>	<b>Deposit Rate</b>	<b>Line of Credit Rate</b>
Passumpsic Savings Bank:	\$330,451	2.19%	2.49%	2.39%
Union Bank:	\$330,451	2.02%	2.142%	2.02%

Treasurer Benjamin Heisholt presented an analysis of anticipated interest costs and earnings for each of the bids. Discussion ensued.

- Ms. Ford moved to accept the bid of Passumpsic Savings Bank for a lump-sum loan of \$330,451 at a rate of 2.19% with reinvestment of proceeds in a deposit account with a rate of 2.49%. Seconded by Mr. Gates and approved by voice vote.

## **6. Consideration of application for Designated Village Center status of Barnet villages**

The Board considered application for Designated Village Center status, as discussed at the previous Board meeting.

- Ms. Ford moved to authorize the Planning Commission/Zoning Board to apply to the Vermont Agency of Commerce & Community Development for Designated Village Center status for Passumpsic Village, Barnet Village, McIndoe Falls, and West Barnet Village. Seconded by Mr. Gates and approved by voice vote.

## **7. Consideration of fees assessed for late-filed 2019 homestead declarations**

Town Clerk Benjamin Heisholt reminded the Board that in 2017 and 2018 they agreed to apply penalties pursuant 32 V.S.A. § 5410(g) in the maximum percentages allowable. Mr. Heisholt reviewed 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 estimates that the penalty on a \$200,000 property at eight percent would be \$239.79, and at three percent would be \$89.92. Mr. Heisholt asked the Board how they would like to proceed with regard to these penalties in 2019. Discussion ensued.

- Mr. Gates moved to apply penalties in 2019 in the maximum percentages allowable pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 5410(g). Seconded by Ms. Ford and approved by voice vote.

**8. Consideration of maintenance of Barnet School property and proposed indemnification and hold harmless agreement**

Town Clerk Benjamin Heisholt indicated that he had not received any new information or documentation regarding this matter.

- Mr. Roberts indicated that he would contact Caledonia Cooperative School District Director Louis Bushey regarding this matter.

**9. Consideration of applications for Uniform Municipal Excess Weight Permits**

- The Board reviewed and approved the fleet applications of Bourne's Inc. & Bourne's Propane DBA Bourne's Energy, J.P. Sicard, Inc., and VELCO.

**10. Other business**

- a. Consideration of response to public correspondence and inquiries.** At their January 21, 2019 meeting, the Board agreed to seek an opinion from the Town Attorney regarding the Board's obligations and procedures with regard to responses to public correspondence and inquiries outside the context of public meetings. Discussion ensued regarding how best to obtain this legal opinion.
  - The Board agreed to invite Town Attorney Steven Adler to their next regular meeting.
- b. Town Garage lighting.** Mr. Roberts reported that students from his St. Johnsbury Academy electrical class are working on replacing the overhead lights at the Town Garage with LED lights.

**11. Outstanding check warrants**

The Board signed all outstanding check warrants.

**12. 2019 budget discussion**

The Board reviewed the 2019 budget as developed in previous meetings, with several amendments made since the previous meeting.

- Mr. Gates moved to approve the budget as presented, with a total tax appropriation of \$1,530,072.86. Seconded by Ms. Ford and approved by voice vote.

**13. Adjournment**

Mr. Gates moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Ms. Ford and approved by voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

*A true copy.*

*Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ Town Clerk*