

**MINUTES – REGULAR SELECTBOARD MEETING
TOWN OF BARNET, VERMONT
MONDAY, JANUARY 13, 2020**

Meeting convened at 7:00 p.m. in the conference room of the Barnet Fire & Rescue Station.

Board members present: Dylan Ford, Benjamin Gates (presiding co-chair), and Mark Jefferson.

Other Town officials and employees present: Planning Commission/Zoning Board Member Benjamin Adams, Library Director Rebecca Boardman, Planning Commission/Zoning Board Member Mark Bowen, Auditor Joseph Breidenstein, Planning Commission/Zoning Board Member Dakota Butterfield, Planning Commission/Zoning Board Member Bruce Denio, Building Committee Chair William Graves, Town Clerk Benjamin Heisholt, Auditor Dennis Kauppila, Library Board Chair Julie Roos, Planning Commission/Zoning Board Member Trent Roy, Building Committee Member David Warden, and Zoning Administrative Officer Shirley Warden.

Members of the public present: Wayne Berge, Marlisa Cheney, Theodore De Macedo Soares, Theresa Del Pozzo, Elizabeth Everts, John Fairchild, Kenneth Faris, Mary Faris, Bobby-Ann Fearon, Claudia Heisholt, Rachel Kittredge, Roseann Drew Leute, Mona Marceau, Charles McAlpine, Lawrence Ruggles, Charles Smith, Charles Somers, Karen Stewart, Cynthia Stuart, Wallace Thrall, Larry Thomas, Mark Vaal, Gail Warnaar, and Celina Wright.

1. Consideration of approval of minutes of special meeting held January 6, 2020

- Ms. Ford moved to approve the minutes of the special meeting held January 6, 2020. Seconded by Mr. Jefferson and approved by voice vote.

2. Comment on agenda items, and any other business, by members of the public

a. Mark Bowen regarding lease lands

Mr. Bowen asked about the Board's action regarding lease lands at their meeting December 2, 2019.

- The Board explained that their decision was to retain lease lands in Town ownership, which effectively maintained the status quo. The Board indicated that they are willing to discuss releasing lease lands on a case-by-case basis if sellers encounter difficulty.

b. Gail Warnaar regarding Passumpsic Village garage

Ms. Warnaar asked about recent developments at the former Passumpsic Village gas station/garage.

- The Board indicated that the Town no longer owns the property in question.

c. Charles Smith regarding President Franklin Delano Roosevelt quote

Mr. Smith read a quote from President Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

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

Mr. Chase did not appear at this meeting. The Board indicated that there was no Highway Department business to discuss.

4. Consideration of, and take any action on, appointment of Planning Commission/Zoning Board member(s)

The Board reviewed a letter from the Planning Commission/Zoning Board (PC/ZB), which indicates that the PC/ZB had nominated Trent Roy to fill the current vacancy on the PC/ZB.

- Ms. Ford moved to nominate Trent Roy to fill the current vacancy on the Planning Commission/Zoning Board. Seconded by Mr. Jefferson and approved by voice vote.

5. Other business presented by other Town officers

No other business was presented by other Town officers.

6. Consideration of, and take any action on, municipal office building project, including a resolution to order the submission of the proposition of incurring a bonded debt to pay for public improvements to the qualified voters at a meeting to be held for that purpose, pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 1755

Cynthia Stuart of Stuart Consulting appeared and presented an update on the municipal building project. She distributed to the Board, other officers, and members of public, a report/memorandum to the Selectboard regarding Barnet Municipal Building Project, dated January 20, 2020. Ms. Stuart presented in summary the contents of the four-page report and seven pages of attachments with headings as follows: Financial Projections, Voting Approaches, Proposed Information Distribution Timeframe, Grants, and Research Expenses. Public comment from many of those present was received during Ms. Stuart’s presentation.

Mr. Gates read a statement as drafted by Ms. Stuart on behalf of the Board with input from individual Board members. The statement indicated that the Board would be bringing forward two borrowing and project options for voter consideration by Australian ballot March 3, 2020.

- Mr. Jefferson moved to bring forth the following article on March 3, 2020: Shall the Town of Barnet voters authorize the borrowing for building a newly constructed municipal office in an amount not to exceed \$850,000 to be financed over a period not to exceed thirty years? Seconded by Ms. Ford and approved by voice vote.
- Mr. Jefferson moved to bring forth the following article on March 3, 2020: Shall the Town of Barnet voters authorize the borrowing for the renovation of the McIndoe Falls Academy building located at 62 Academy Lane, Barnet VT in an amount not to exceed \$1,650,000 to be financed over a period not to exceed thirty years? Seconded by Ms. Ford and approved by voice vote.

Public comment from many of those present was received after the Board’s action.

7. Consideration of, and take any action on, tax anticipation borrowing bids

The Board reviewed bids for tax anticipation borrowing for calendar year 2020. Bids received are summarized below.

	Loan Amount	Loan Rate	Deposit Rate	Line of Credit Rate
Mascoma Bank	\$417,958.18	3.20%	1.20%	3.30%
Passumpsic Savings Bank:	\$417,958.18	1.90%	2.20%	1.79%
Union Bank:	\$417,958.00	2.30%	2.40%	2.30%

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 Union Bank for a lump-sum loan of \$417,958.00 at a rate of 2.30% with reinvestment of proceeds in a deposit account with a rate of 2.40%. Seconded by Mr. Jefferson and approved by voice vote.

8. Consideration of, and take any action on, fees for late-filed Homestead Declarations

The Board reviewed its decisions from 2017, 2018, and 2019, when it agreed to apply penalties in the maximum percentages allowable pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 5410(g). Treasurer Benjamin 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. 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 asked the Board how they would like to proceed with regard to these penalties in 2020. Discussion ensued.

- Ms. Ford moved to apply penalties in 2020 in the maximum percentages allowable pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 5410(g). Seconded by Mr. Jefferson and approved by voice vote.

9. Consideration of, and take any action on, 2020 Certificate of Highway Mileage

The Board reviewed a letter and attached instructions regarding the Town’s annual obligation to report on the mileages of various classes of roads.

- The Board signed the Certificate as indicating that there were no changes in mileages from the previous year.

10. Correspondence from Vermont Department of Taxes regarding 2019 Equalization Study results

The Board read a letter indicating the results of the study, as summarized below:

- Education Grant List (from 411): \$246,816,561
- Equalized Education Grand List (EEGL): \$237,660,518
- Common Level of Appraisal (CLA): 103.85% or 1.0385
- Coefficient of Dispersion (COD): 17.23%

Discussion ensued.

11. Correspondence from Vermont State Police regarding 2019 incident report

The Board reviewed a report of Barnet incidents (317 total) to which the Vermont State Police responded during the 2019 calendar year.

12. Correspondence from Downs Rachlin Martin PLLC regarding The Helicon Group, L.P. d/b/a Charter Communications’ application to the Vermont Public Utility Commission in connection with Certificate of Public Good

The Board reviewed a letter describing documents related to Charter’s Application to the Vermont Public Utility Commission “in connection with internal reorganization of Charter, and issuance of a Certificate of Public Good with the same terms and conditions when the Charter companies combine, to provide cable-television service in accordance with its line-extension policy.”

13. Outstanding check warrants

The Board signed all outstanding check warrants.

14. Other business presented by Selectboard

a. Efficiency Vermont

Ms. Ford confirmed that she plans to attend the Better Buildings by Design Conference conference to be held February 5 and 6, 2020 in South Burlington, as discussed at the previous Board meeting. She also indicated that Efficiency Vermont has agreed to perform a walk-

through of the Barnet Public Library building and the McIndoe Falls Academy to provide consultation on possible efficiency improvements.

b. Fire Protection Regionalization Study

The Board reviewed an email from Northeastern Vermont Development Association (NVDA), with an attached draft "Memorandum of Understanding" in regard to the Fire Protection Regionalization Study, and a work plan on which the \$31,000 Municipal Planning Grant award was based. NVDA requests an indication of whether a representative from Barnet will attend a meeting on January 29, 2020. Ms. Ford indicated that Fire Chief Ronald Morse intends to attend the meeting. Discussion ensued.

15. Consideration of Highway Department personnel matters

- Ms. Ford moved to enter executive session to discuss Highway Department personnel matters, pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3). Seconded by Mr. Jefferson and approved by voice vote. Entered executive session at 8:10 p.m. Those present in executive session: Ms. Ford, Mr. Gates, Mr. Jefferson, and Town Clerk Benjamin Heisholt.
- Ms. Ford moved to exit executive session. Seconded by Mr. Jefferson and approved by voice vote. Exited executive session at 8:37 p.m.
- Ms. Ford moved to credit Highway Department employee Glenn Fearon forty (40) hours of vacation time, to refund vacation hours used in December 2019 in connection with a workplace injury. Seconded by Mr. Jefferson and approved by voice vote.
- Ms. Ford moved to approve pay rate increases as discussed in executive session. Seconded by Mr. Jefferson and approved by voice vote.

16. Consideration of 2020 budget

The Board continued its review of the 2020 budget.

- Ms. Ford moved to approve the budget as reviewed and amended, with total expenditures of \$1,990,698.62 and tax appropriation request of \$1,615,648.62. Seconded by Mr. Jefferson and approved by voice vote.

17. Adjournment

- Mr. Gates moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Ms. Ford and approved by voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

A true copy.

Attest: _____ Town Clerk