

**MINUTES – REMOTE SPECIAL SELECTBOARD MEETING
TOWN OF BARNET, VERMONT
TUESDAY, MAY 26, 2020**

Meeting convened at 7:00 p.m. via GoToMeeting telephone/video conference. There was no physical meeting place for this meeting. This meeting was audio recorded via GoToMeeting.

Board members participating via GoToMeeting telephone/video conference: Dylan Ford, Benjamin Gates (presiding co-chair), and Mark Jefferson.

Other Town officials and employees participating via GoToMeeting telephone/video conference: Road Foreman Mark Chase, Beach Committee Chair Christen Emerson, and Town Clerk Benjamin Heisholt.

Members of the public participating via GoToMeeting telephone or video conference: Mona Marceau, Kathleen Monroe, Brent O'Donnell, and January O'Donnell.

1. Consideration of approval of minutes of regular meeting held May 11, 2020

- Ms. Ford moved to approve as presented the minutes of the regular meeting held May 11, 2020. Seconded by Mr. Jefferson and approved by voice vote.

2. Consideration of, and take any action on, correspondence from January and Brent O'Donnell regarding request for extension on Selectboard order relating to animal bite finding

The Board reviewed an email indicating that Ms. and Mr. O'Donnell have had difficulty procuring building materials to construct a fence system to contain their dog Goliath, per the Selectboard's order dating from a hearing held March 23, 2020. The deadline for construction, originally May 15, had already been extended to May 30. The letter indicates that delays related to COVID-19 have thus far prevented the O'Donnells from procuring the materials in spite of multiple attempts and contacts with two different vendors, and that the O'Donnells will be unable to complete construction by May 30. Mr. and Ms. O'Donnell participated remotely in this meeting, and asked for an extension of the deadline for construction, since the circumstances causing the delay are outside of their control.

- The Board agreed to extend the deadline for the construction of the fence system until the O'Donnells are able to procure materials necessary for construction. The Board requested that the O'Donnells notify them when the materials are received and when the construction is complete.

3. Other business presented by members of the public

a. Kathleen Monroe regarding timing of installation of "beaver deceiver" in Harvey's Lake outlet channel

Ms. Monroe reported that she had heard from a Barnet resident that there is an "enormous" beaver dam in the channel. She inquired about when the Board plans to install a "beaver deceiver" as discussed at previous meetings.

- Ms. Ford reported that she had traveled the channel recently and did not find new beaver activity, and that she had thereafter placed a hold on "beaver deceiver" installation. Ms. Ford said she would continue to monitor the area for new beaver activity.

b. Kathleen Monroe regarding WIFI hotspots

Ms. Monroe reported that Katherine Sims, Director of Northeast Kingdom Collaborative, is assisting the Vermont Department of Public Service as they offer free WIFI hotspots to communities to boost internet signals out to parking lots so that the public can access the internet.

Discussion ensued regarding potential Barnet locations, including the Town Clerk's Office, and boosting the range of the Barnet Public Library's WIFI so that it reaches the parking lot.

c. Kathleen Monroe regarding dust control/chloride on Aiken Farm Road

Ms. Monroe reported that Aiken Farm Road, near its intersection with Harvey Mountain Road, is very dry and dusty; she requested that the Highway Department apply chloride.

- Road Foreman Mark Chase indicated that the Highway Department would apply chloride on Aiken Farm Road.

4. Appearance by Road Foreman Mark Chase regarding Highway Department matters; take any action

a. Consideration of, and take any action on, operations under COVID-19 restrictions

Mr. Chase reported that operations under COVID-19 restrictions had not changed since the last Board meeting, and were working well.

b. Consideration of, and take any action on, purchase of two-way radios from CVC Paging

Mr. Chase reported that the Highway Department had tested two-way radios from CVC Paging. The Highway Department found that these radios, which access bases on Burke Mountain and in Bradford, perform much better than the radios the Highway Department currently uses. The radios currently in use are functional in approximately 30% to 40% of Barnet, whereas the radios from CVC Paging are functional in approximately 85% to 90% of Barnet. Cost for the CVC Paging radios are \$99 for installation of each radio, plus \$29 per month per radio lease fees under a two-year lease agreement. The Highway Department uses 14 radios, so annual lease fees would cost approximately \$4,900. Mr. Chase said that CVC Paging would accept the Town's current radios in trade. A quote for trade-in was not obtained, but trade-in value is estimated at \$100 per radio. Discussion ensued.

- Mr. Gates moved to lease 14 radios from CVC Paging, trading in 14 radios that the Highway Department currently uses. Seconded by Mr. Jefferson and approved by voice vote.

c. Consideration of, and take any action on, review of State grant applications for Class 2 Roadway and Structures programs

The Board reviewed a Class 2 Roadway grant application for a paving project on Barnet Center Road, and a Structures Grant application for a project involving installation of two culverts on Roy Mountain Road. These applications were submitted May 15.

d. Consideration of, and take any action on, applications for Uniform Municipal Excess Weight Permits

The Board reviewed and approved the fleet application of Limlaw Chipping and Land Clearing Inc.

e. Other business

i. Winter sand screening schedule

Mr. Chase reported that screening of winter sand is anticipated to commence the week following this meeting.

ii. Paving schedule

Mr. Chase reported that Pike Industries has completed most of Barnet's 2020 paving. He indicated that Meeting House Hill and a portion of Town Forest Road remain to be finished.

iii. Summer maintenance

Mr. Chase reported that the Highway Department continues to perform routine early summer maintenance, including grading and applying chloride. He reported that he has been unable to find a street sweeper for rent, as directed by the Board; he intends to wash streets where possible and necessary.

iv. Sign theft and vandalism

Mr. Chase reported on the continuing problem of theft and vandalism of street signs. Discussion ensued.

v. **Town forest logging funds**

Mr. Gates reported that some revenues from the town forest logging project have been received; more are expected.

5. Other business presented by other Town officers

There was no other business presented by other Town officers.

6. Consideration of, and take any action on, correspondence from Beach Committee regarding recommendations for 2020 beach season

Mr. Gates read an email with attached recommendations for operations under Covid-19. Per the correspondence, the Committee recommends:

- Allowing free admittance at the beach, while cancelling and refunding all pavilion reservations.
- Carry in/carry out policy for trash.
- No lifeguards/swim at your own risk.
- Two portable toilets.
- Purchase of signage for all of the above.
- Hire of a groundskeeper for ten hours per week with an hourly rate of \$15.

Beach Committee Chair Christen Emerson participated in this meeting remotely. She indicated that the Beach Committee now recommends the following, in addition to and amendment of their correspondence:

- All trash receptacles at the beach be removed, to discourage deposit of trash.
- Groundskeeper position be increased to fourteen hours per week, so that the beach can be monitored daily.

Ms. Ford discussed her investigation into legal requirements for beach operations under Covid-19. She reported that few actions are required if the beach is closed to the public altogether (locked gates), but if the gates are open, even if not collecting fees and operating on a “swim at your own risk” basis, several requirements apply.

- Ms. Ford moved to accept the recommendations of the Beach Committee, with amendments as indicated by Ms. Emerson, and operate the beach on these bases for the 2020 season. Seconded by Mr. Jefferson and approved by voice vote.

7. Consideration of, and take any action on, Town Clerk’s Office capital expenditures for operations under COVID-19

Town Clerk Benjamin Heisholt discussed proposals to prepare the office for limited or phased reopening. He requested investment in two capital expenditures to facilitate social distancing and air flow restriction, given the small and open nature of the portion of the building used by staff and customers. These are: 1) a barrier, in the form of a plastic curtain or a more permanent counter or wall, to separate the staff area from the customer area/lobby, and 2) an additional copier for the exclusive use of the staff in the staff area, leaving the current copier in the customer area for use by professionals conducting research in the vault. The Board reviewed pricing and information for two options for plastic curtain barriers and three options for copiers.

- The Board agreed to purchase a Sharp MXB350W copier from W.B. Mason for \$1,295.
- The Board agreed to pursue construction of a counter-based barrier structure. The Board agreed that Mr. Gates would contact builder Ben Adams to discuss.

8. Consideration of, and take any action on, correspondence from Planning Commission/Zoning Board member George Pierce regarding Planning Commission/Zoning Board attendance and membership

Mr. Gates read a copy of a letter from Mr. Pierce to the Planning Commission/Zoning Board (PC/ZB). The letter is in response to the minutes of the January 7, 2020 PC/ZB meeting. Mr. Pierce's letter states that the minutes suggest that he should resign as a member of the PC/ZB due to unexcused meeting absences. The letter indicates that the Selectboard has re-appointed him as a member of the PC/ZB several times with the understanding that he will miss meetings while in Florida half of the year. Discussion ensued.

9. Consideration of, and take any action on, bid summary and proposed budget for Town Hall & former Fire Station asbestos abatement

The Board reviewed the bid summary and proposed budget.

- The Board agreed to table discussion of this matter.

10. Consideration of, and take any action on, Harvey's Lake boat wash program

Ms. Ford reported that the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife has agreed to allow the presence of the boat wash station at the boat access parking lot for 2020, but will require monitoring of the parking lot use and will not allow the station at its current size in 2021. Discussion ensued.

11. Consideration of, and take any action on, correspondence from Great River Hydro LLC regarding recreational area restrictions

The Board reviewed an email indicating changes to operations of recreation sites due to COVID-19. The facilities at Comerford will be limited. The McIndoe picnic area will be closed and the portage will be open.

12. Other business presented by Selectboard

a. Passumpsic memorial flag

Mr. Gates discussed the recently installed pole and flag at the memorial in Passumpsic.

- The Board agreed that they will install a more permanent, concrete base for the flag pole, and will investigate options for lighting of the flag.

13. Adjournment

- Ms. Ford moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Mr. Jefferson and approved by voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

A true copy.

Attest: _____ *Town Clerk*