

**MINUTES
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**

**TOWN OF BARNET, VERMONT
MONDAY, APRIL 25, 2022**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. at the Barnet Elementary School gymnasium by Moderator Dennis McLam.

ARTICLE 1. To elect a Moderator.

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

The Moderator allowed a brief intermission for Vermont legislator Marcia Martel to speak regarding various recent actions and potential future actions of the legislature. With the voters' approval, non-voter Ms. Martel was allowed to speak.

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 Mark Jefferson is expiring.
- Mark Jefferson nominated by Benjamin Gates.
- Hearing no further nominations, Moderator announced that nominations would cease.
- Moderator instructed Town Clerk to cast one ballot for Mark Jefferson.

Lister

- Moderator stated that the three-year term of John Cook is expiring.
- Moderator read a letter from John Cook indicating that Mr. Cook does not seek re-election.
- David Warden nominated by Alan Boye.
- Nancy Bishop nominated by John Fairchild.
- Hearing no further nominations, Moderator announced that nominations would cease.
- John Fairchild, a current Lister, spoke in support of the nomination of Nancy Bishop, stating that Ms. Bishop has computer skills and experience in office work. Ms. Bishop, who was not present, had indicated to Mr. Fairchild that she is willing to serve as Lister.
- David Warden spoke, indicating that he is willing to serve as Lister and discussing his previous experience as a town officer, including as a Lister.
- A paper ballot is required for the office of Lister. Paper ballots were distributed, voted, and counted by the Board of Civil Authority.
- While the Board of Civil Authority counted the ballots, Zoning Administrative Officer and Transfer Station attendant Shirley Warden spoke regarding zoning permits and Transfer Station matters.
- Moderator announced that 81 total votes were cast. 41 votes were required for election. 52 votes were cast for Nancy Bishop, 29 votes were cast for David Warden.
- Moderator stated that Nancy Bishop was elected.

Lister

- Moderator stated that this office has one year remaining of a three-year term. Sarah Cook resigned, and a replacement was not appointed.
- David Warden nominated by Alan Boye.
- Mona Marceau moved that nominations cease. Seconded by Roseann Drew Leute. Hearing no objections, Moderator announced that nominations would cease.
- Moderator instructed Town Clerk to cast one ballot David Warden.

Auditor

- Moderator stated that the three-year term of Jeffery Riley is expiring.
- Jeffery Riley nominated Roseann Drew Leute.
- Hearing no further nominations, Moderator announced that nominations would cease.
- Moderator instructed Town Clerk to cast one ballot for Jeffery Riley.

Collector of Delinquent Tax

- Moderator stated that the one-year term of Lisa Bowden is expiring.
- Lisa Bowden nominated by Mark Gilleland.
- Mona Marceau moved that nominations cease. Seconded by Jonathan Carpenter. Hearing no objections, 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 Mona Marceau.
- Hearing no further nominations, Moderator announced that nominations would cease.
- Moderator instructed Town Clerk to cast one ballot for David Willis.

Trustee of Public Funds

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

Library Trustee

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

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

- Caroline Demaio moved to accept the report of the Town Auditors as it appears on page twenty-eight of the Town Report. Seconded by Mark Bowen.
- 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 New Hampshire and Vermont?

- Alan Boye 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 Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) to the Barnet Historical Society to be used for maintaining the Goodwillie House?

- Mona Marceau moved the article as warned. Seconded by Roseann Drew Leute.
- 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?

- Caroline Demaio moved the article as warned. Seconded by Charles McAlpine.
- 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?

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

ARTICLE 8. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) to Catamount Arts?

- Jay Sprout moved the article as warned. Seconded by Caroline Demaio.
- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 9. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) to The Community Restorative Justice Center?

- Jay Sprout moved the article as warned. Seconded by Nancy Sprout.
- Levering White spoke in opposition to the motion, arguing that the requestor receives funding from the Department of Corrections and that Barnet taxpayers should focus funding on local services.
- Caroline Demaio spoke in favor of the motion, arguing that the requestor does serve members of the Barnet community.
- Barnet Public Library Librarian Dylan Ford spoke, indicating that the requestor does use the library to meet with Barnet residents, confirming that they serve the Barnet community.
- Wendy Stein spoke in favor of the motion, arguing that Barnet needs to view its community as extending beyond the town of Barnet.
- Harry Adamek spoke in favor of the motion. He indicated that he has worked for the requestor for seven or eight years and finds that they provide a valuable service and need more funding.
- Mona Marceau asked if the requestor had also requested appropriations in neighboring towns in 2022.
 - Dylan Ford responded, indicating that the requestor had requested 2022 appropriations from neighboring towns.
- 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?

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

ARTICLE 11. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) to Habitat for Humanity in the Northeast Kingdom?

- Leland Alper moved the article as warned. Seconded by Jay Sprout.
- Levering White spoke in opposition to the motion, arguing that the requestor is part of a large national organization with fund-raising campaigns that raise millions of dollars and that Barnet taxpayers should focus funding on local services.
- Jay Sprout spoke in favor of the motion, stating that the requestor is the local branch of a national organization and receives no funding from the national organization and that all of the local branch's funding is raised locally and spent locally.
- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 12. 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 Grace Gershuny.
- Levering White spoke, stating that this requestor's services are for cats.
- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 13. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) to Northeast Kingdom Council on Aging?

- Caroline Demaio moved the article as warned. Seconded by Mona Marceau.
- 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 Brynn Evans.
- 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.?

- Brynn Evans 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 Dollars (\$1,000.00) to Northeast Kingdom Youth Services?

- Caroline Demaio 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 One Hundred Dollars (\$1,100.00) to Rural Community Transportation?

- Jay Sprout moved the article as warned. Seconded by Alan Boye.
- 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.?

- Alan Boye moved the article as warned. Seconded by Mona Marceau.
- 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?

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

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

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

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

- Lisa Bowden moved that property taxes become due and payable in hand to the town Treasurer during business hours on or before October 15, 2022, 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 made 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 1.5% 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.

- Selectboard member Benjamin Gates moved to raise the sum of \$1,674,137.04 for the General Fund budget. Seconded by Mark Bowen.
- Mona Marceau asked about the costs for the feasibility study for the renovation and repurposing of the Town Hall as a municipal office and about the costs for a previous feasibility study for a similar proposed project at the McIndoe Falls Academy.
 - Benjamin Gates stated that in 2021 the Town expended \$600 and in 2022 the Town has expended approximately \$2,600 and obligated an additional \$4,800.
 - The Selectboard indicated that McIndoe Falls feasibility study expenditure totals were not readily available, but most of the costs were offset by grants.
 - Benjamin Gates indicated that the Town may be eligible for some grant funding for the Town Hall project, but the Selectboard intends to work primarily from Town funding.
 - The Selectboard indicated that they intend to leverage Town Hall feasibility study costs to reduce future project costs, including architectural plans.
- Grace Gershuny asked how much funding the Town received from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and how the Selectboard will decide how to spend it.
 - Dylan Ford reported that the Town will receive approximately \$488,000 in ARPA funding. When the Selectboard originally learned about ARPA funding, available information indicated that allowable uses of the funds would be somewhat restrictive. More recent information, however, indicates that Selectboard may expand uses of the funds to any traditional government services. The Selectboard has focused its internal discussions on infrastructure projects, including bridges. Suggestions from residents and taxpayers are welcome and may be sent to the Town Clerk.
- Grace Gershuny asked if the Selectboard would consider using ARPA funding to make the Town

Forest accessible and safe for the public.

- Benjamin Gates indicated that the so-called Town Forest is not a town forest as traditionally understood. It has never been used for recreational purposes but has served previously as a town dump and source of lumber and firewood, and currently as a gravel pit. It would be costly to convert a portion of the property to recreational use and it is uncertain if it would be allowable under Mine Safety and Health Administration rules. The Selectboard is not likely to consider it.
- Shirley Warden spoke about her research on the history of the Town's acquisition and use of the so-called Town Forest. She indicated that there is no evidence that the property was ever purchased or used under the auspices of the 1915 state law regarding municipal forests.
- Benjamin Gates's motion to raise the sum of \$1,674,137.04 for the General Fund budget was passed by voice vote.

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

- Mona Marceau spoke about low turnout for the April 5, 2022 school district election. She suggested that better communication and advertising be done to raise awareness and mitigate confusion about location and date.
- Mona Marceau spoke to encourage voters to participate in Selectboard meetings, which are accessible remotely online.
- Dylan Ford spoke in appreciation for the service of Listers John Cook and Sarah Cook, who both retired from their Lister positions at this meeting. Mr. Cook served for ten years and Ms. Cook for nine years.
 - Ms. Cook spoke in appreciation for her opportunity to serve the Town and for the cooperation and kindness of taxpayers, even in adversarial situations like grievance hearings.

Hearing no further business, the Moderator announced that the meeting would adjourn. Meeting adjourned 7:36 p.m.

Dennis McLam, Moderator

Dylan Ford, Selectboard Co-Chair

Attest: Benjamin Heisholt, Town Clerk