

MINUTES - REGULAR SELECTBOARD MEETING

TOWN OF BARNET, VERMONT

MONDAY, JANUARY 9, 2023

Meeting convened at 7:00 p.m. in-person at Barnet Fire & Rescue Station (151 Bimson Drive) and via GoToMeeting telephone/online conference. This meeting was recorded via GoToMeeting.

Board members participating in-person: Dylan Ford and Benjamin Gates (presiding co-chair).

Other Town officials and employees participating in-person: Road Foreman Mark Chase, Town Clerk Benjamin Heisholt, Lister David Warden, and Zoning Administrative Officer Shirley Warden.

Other Town officials and employees participating via GoToMeeting: None.

Members of the public participating in-person: Leland Alper, Jonathan Carpenter, and Tammy Carpenter.

Members of the public participating via GoToMeeting: Amy Ash Nixon (Caledonian Record).

1. Consideration of approval of minutes of special meeting held December 27, 2022

- Ms. Ford moved to approve as presented the minutes of the special meeting held December 27, 2022. Seconded by Mr. Gates and approved by voice vote.

2. Other business presented by members of the public

There was no other business presented by members of the public.

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

a. Consideration of, and take any action on, correspondence from Vermont Agency of Transportation regarding 2023 Mileage Certificate

The Board reviewed a 2023 certificate of highway mileage, which indicates all mileages as unchanged from 2022, at 0.00 miles of Class 1, 23.51 miles of Class 2, 58.46 miles of Class 3, 21.19 miles of state highway, 0.00 miles of Class 1 lane, 10.95 miles of Class 4, and 0.09 miles of legal trail.

- The Board agreed to sign the certificate; the Board signed the certificate.

b. Other business

i. Trucks in use

Mr. Chase reported that all trucks are now in good repair and in use.

4. Other business presented by other town officers

There was no other business presented by other town officers.

5. Consideration of, and take any action on, next steps in Town Hall project

Mr. Gates reported that the construction manager and architect contracts remain under legal review. The Board noted that there was no new business to report or discuss regarding this matter.

6. Consideration of, and take any action on, 2023 tax anticipation borrowing bids

The Board reviewed bids for tax anticipation borrowing for calendar year 2023. Bids received are summarized below.

	<u>Loan Amount</u>	<u>Loan Rate</u>	<u>Deposit Rate</u>	<u>Line of Credit Rate</u>
Community National Bank	\$791,924.92	2.92%	3.22%	3.69%
Mascoma Bank	No bid	No bid	No bid	4.00%
Passumpsic Bank:	\$791,924.92	3.02%	3.25%	3.91%
Union Bank:	\$791,924.92	3.20%	3.35%	4.50%

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 Bank for a lump-sum loan of \$791,924.92 at a rate of 3.02% with reinvestment of proceeds in a deposit account with a rate of 3.25%. Seconded by Mr. Gates and approved by voice vote.

7. Consideration of, and take any action on, assessment of penalties for late filed 2023 Homestead Declarations

The Board reviewed its decisions from 2017 through 2022, 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 under certain circumstances related to homestead declaration filings, a revised property tax bill may "...as determined by the governing body of the municipality, include a penalty of up to three percent of the education tax on the property. However, if the property incorrectly declared as a homestead is located in a municipality that has a lower homestead tax rate than the nonhomestead tax rate or if an undeclared homestead is located in a municipality that has a lower nonhomestead tax rate than the homestead tax rate, then the governing body of the municipality may include a penalty of up to eight percent of the education tax liability on the property." These penalties would apply to the revised tax bill 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. Mr. Heisholt asked the Board how they would like to proceed regarding these penalties in 2023. Discussion ensued.

- Mr. Gates moved to apply penalties in 2023 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, and take any action on, correspondence from Vermont Department of Taxes regarding 2022 equalization study results

The Board reviewed the study results, which were as summarized below:

- Education Grand List: \$245,038,100
- Equalized Education Grand List: \$271,433.054
- Common Level of Appraisal: 90.27% or 0.9027
- Coefficient of Dispersion: 18.55%

9. Consideration of, and take any action on, planning for expenditures of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds

The Board noted that there was no new business to report or discuss regarding this matter.

- No action taken

10. Consideration of, and take any action on, correspondence from Northeast Kingdom Broadband regarding optical line terminal siting

The Board reviewed correspondence from Town Attorney Steven Adler.

- No action taken.

11. Consideration of, and take any action on, sign for Fire & Rescue Station

The Board noted that there was no new business to report or discuss regarding this matter.

- No action taken

12. Consideration of, and take any action on, memorial for veterans of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan

Ms. Ford reported that she had not received any additional quotes for the memorial plaque. She also reported that she had received comments from residents interested in donating funds for this project. The Board discussed promoting the opportunity to contribute to funding the plaque via Front Porch Forum, Facebook, etc.

13. Consideration of approval of outstanding check warrants

- The Board reviewed and approved all outstanding check warrants.

14. Other business presented by Selectboard

a. Harvey's Lake Dam Committee

Ms. Ford discussed her meeting with Robert Dufresne of the Dam Committee and new information related to the proposed dam project discussed at recent Board meetings. Ms. Ford suggested that the total project budget may be approximately \$25,000.

b. Noise complaint

Mr. Gates reported that Daniel Ehlers of Brook Hill Road recently registered a complaint regarding noise created by an ice-skating rink near his residence.

c. Use of loader at Transfer Station & Recycling Center

Mr. Gates reported that Transfer Station & Recycling Center attendant Daniel Ehlers recently inquired about Transfer Station & Recycling Center staff using the Highway Department's loader at the facility to crush materials in the construction dumpsters.

- The Board agreed that all Highway Department equipment, including the loader at the Transfer Station & Recycling Center, may be operated *only* by Highway Department personnel.

d. Highway Department job descriptions and safety policies

Mr. Gates noted the receipt of literature (model documents, etc.) from Vermont League of Cities & Towns regarding Highway Department job descriptions and safety policies. The Board discussed with Road Foreman Mark Chase a plan for development of formal Town documents based on these Vermont League of Cities & Towns documents.

e. Boot allowance

Mr. Gates suggested that the Board consider increasing the dollar amounts of the reimbursement allowance provided Highway Department employees for purchase of leather work boots and rubber boots.

- The Board agreed to add this item to the agenda of their next meeting.

f. Theater curtains

School Board member David Warden appeared and discussed the historic theater curtains owned by the Town. He indicated that the School Board has agreed that curtains may be housed at Barnet School if needed.

15. Consideration of, and take any action on, 2023 Town General Fund budget

The Board continued its review and revision of the 2023 budget.

16. Consideration of, and take any action on, correspondence from attorney Clarke Atwell regarding appeal of zoning permit issued to Michael & Jane Lawton

The Board noted that there was no new business to report or discuss regarding this matter.

- No action taken

17. Adjournment

- Ms. Ford moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Mr. Gates and approved by voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 8:41 p.m.

A true copy. Attest: _____ *Town Clerk*