

# MINUTES - REGULAR SELECTBOARD MEETING

## TOWN OF BARNET, VERMONT

MONDAY, JANUARY 23, 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 (presiding co-chair), Benjamin Gates, and Mark Jefferson.

**Other Town officials and employees participating in-person:** Road Foreman Mark Chase, and Town Clerk Benjamin Heisholt.

**Other Town officials and employees participating via GoToMeeting:** None.

**Members of the public participating in-person:** Eric Skovsted.

**Members of the public participating via GoToMeeting:** Jonathan Carpenter.

### 1. Consideration of approval of minutes of regular meeting held January 9, 2023

Town Clerk Benjamin Heisholt noted that School Board member David Warden indicated that the draft minutes should be amended with regard to item #14.f.; the draft minutes indicate that historic theater curtains are currently stored at the Barnet School whereas they should indicate that the School Board has authorized the curtains, currently stored elsewhere, to be housed at the Barnet School if the Selectboard so chooses.

- Mr. Gates moved to approve, with amendment as suggested by David Warden, the minutes of the regular meeting held January 9, 2023. Seconded by Ms. Ford and approved by voice vote.

### 2. Appearance by resident Eric Skovsted regarding Joe's Brook Road neighborhood noise harassment; take any action

Mr. Skovsted appeared and discussed alleged noise harassment by neighbor Daniel Ehlers of Brook Hill Road. The allegations were of a similar nature to those discussed at Selectboard meetings held December 27, 2021, January 10, 2022, and September 26, 2022. Mr. Skovsted read statements from himself, Christopher Colpitts, Hillary Cohen, Amber Reed, Sybil Geddes, and Phoebe Weisenfeld. Mr. Skovsted also played two audio recordings of the alleged noise harassment. Mr. Skovsted requested that the Board consider adopting a noise ordinance that would restrict noise of the nature alleged of Mr. Ehlers. Discussion ensued.

- The Board agreed to discuss possible avenues for resolution with the Sheriff's Department.

### 3. Other business presented by members of the public

No other business was presented by members of the public.

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

- a. Consideration of, and take any action on, 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 and Newport Sand & Gravel Co., Inc./Carroll Concrete, Co., Inc.
- b. Consideration of, and take any action on, 2023 highway and bridge weight restrictions**
- 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.
- The Board agreed to report the same special weight limits in 2023 as were reported in 2022.
- c. Consideration of, and take any action on, amendment of Personnel Policy regarding reimbursement to Highway Department employees for purchase of safety-toe work boots and safety-toe rubber boots**
- The Board reviewed the Town’s current personnel policy. In Section VII, Part E, the policy provides that the “Town shall reimburse an amount not to exceed one hundred dollars (\$100) annually to each Highway Department employee for the purchase of safety-toe work boots. For the purposes of this Part, a year shall be defined as a calendar year beginning January 1 and ending December 31.” In Section VII, Part F, the policy provides that the “Town shall reimburse an amount not to exceed one hundred dollars (\$100) biennially to each Highway Department employee for the purchase of safety-toe rubber boots. For the purposes of this Part, a year shall be defined as a calendar year beginning January 1 and ending December 31.” Discussion ensued.
- Mr. Gates moved to amend Section VII, Part E of the personnel policy to read that the “Town shall reimburse an amount not to exceed two hundred fifty dollars (\$250.00) annually to each Highway Department employee for the purchase of safety-toe work boots. For the purposes of this Part, a year shall be defined as a calendar year beginning January 1 and ending December 31.” Seconded by Mr. Jefferson and approved by voice vote.
- d. Other business**
- i. Highway Department fringe benefits**
- Mr. Jefferson suggested that the Board consider further amending the personnel policy to a) provide a minimum payment to Highway Department employees when they are called in off-hours to perform emergency work (e.g. clearing trees from roads), and b) provide an increase in vacation time accrual at fifteen (15) years of employment.
- The Board agreed to add these items to the agenda of their next meeting.

**5. Consideration of, and take any action on, Covid-positive employee policy**

The Board reviewed the approved minutes of the regular meeting January 24, 2022, which reflects the Board’s approval of a one-year Covid-positive employee policy. The Board noted that the policy will expire January 25, 2023.

**6. Consideration of, and take any action on, Grand List Certificate of No Appeal or Suit Pending**

The Board reviewed a Certificate form for attachment to the 2022 Grand List book, to indicate that as of the current date “there are not any appeals pending from action of the Listers nor suits pending to recover taxes paid under protest relating to the April 1, 2022 grand list.”

- The Board signed the certificate.

**7. Other business presented by other town officers**

There was no other business presented by other town officers.

**8. Consideration of, and take any action on, correspondence from resident Kyle Bourtelle regarding spelling of Symns Pond Road**

The Board reviewed a letter requesting that the spelling of Symns Pond Road be changed to “Symes Pond Road.” The Board noted receipt of another letter requesting that “Pavillion Lane” be changed to “Pavilion Lane.”

- The Board agreed to add these requests to their planned hearing for re-naming of roads, originally planned for Warden Road/Chamberlin Road.

**9. Consideration of, and take any action on, correspondence from CAI Technologies regarding Tax Map Maintenance Proposal**

The Board reviewed the 2023-2024 proposal and contract. Terms of proposal and contract are the same as the 2022-2023 proposal and contract; the cost to the Town increases from \$2,700.00 to \$2,900.00.

- Mr. Gates moved to approve the contract. Seconded by Mr. Jefferson and approved by voice vote. The Board signed the contract.

**10. Consideration of, and take any action on, correspondence from Northeast Kingdom Broadband regarding Wireless Challenge Submission to Federal Communications Commission (FCC)**

The Board reviewed emails indicating that Northeast Kingdom Broadband successfully filed a challenge to the FCC’s data regarding high-speed wireless availability in the Northeast Kingdom; the challenge included 610 addresses.

**11. Consideration of, and take any action on, correspondence from Springer Law Office, PLLC regarding Petition of T-Mobile Northeast, LLC requesting Certificate of Public Good for a de minimis modification to a wireless telecommunications facility at 352 Tower Road**

The Board reviewed a petition and associated supporting documentation.

**12. Consideration of, and take any action on, warning for 2023 annual town meeting**

The Board reviewed the draft of a proposed 2023 Annual Town Meeting warning. The warning is similar to the 2022 Annual Town Meeting warning, with differences in the date and time of the meeting and in the removal of one social service agency appropriation request and the reduction of another.

- The Board signed the warning.

**13. Consideration of, and take any action on, execution of 2023 tax anticipation borrowing documents**

The Board reviewed documents from Passumpsic Savings Bank relating to 2023 tax anticipation borrowing.

- The Board signed the tax anticipation borrowing documents.

**14. 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.

- No action taken.

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

The Board discussed the status of negotiations with Northeast Kingdom Broadband regarding an easement.

- The Board agreed to advise Town Attorney Steven Adler that the Board would like the easement to include a) stipulation that the Selectboard must approve any future transfer of the easement, and 2) the boundaries of the easement be clearly defined and demarcated.

**16. 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.

**17. 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.

- The Board agreed to ask for a quote from Gandin Brothers of South Ryegate. The Board agreed that if Gandin Brothers does not offer a quote the Board will accept the quote of the vendor referenced at the December 12, 2022 meeting.

**18. Consideration of approval of outstanding check warrants**

- The Board reviewed and approved all outstanding check warrants.

**19. Other business presented by Selectboard**

**a. Uniforms costs**

Road Forman Mark Chase reported that he had successfully negotiated new Highway Department uniform prices from Cintas after having received an offer from Unifirst.

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

The Board continued its review, discussion, and amendment of the 2023 General Fund budget.

- Mr. Gates moved to approve a final proposed budget with total tax appropriation of \$1,828,374.85. Seconded by Mr. Jefferson and approved by voice vote.

**21. 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.

**22. Adjournment**

- Mr. Gates moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Mr. Jefferson and approved by voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 8:39 p.m.

*A true copy. Attest:* \_\_\_\_\_ *Town Clerk*