

DRAFT

MINUTES - REGULAR SELECTBOARD MEETING

TOWN OF BARNET, VERMONT

MONDAY, AUGUST 14, 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, Town Clerk Benjamin Heisholt, and Zoning Administrative Officer Shirley Warden.

Other Town officials and employees participating via GoToMeeting: None.

Members of the public participating in-person: Jonathan Carpenter, Jay Sprout, and David Warden.

Members of the public participating via GoToMeeting: Mona Marceau.

1. Consideration of approval of minutes of regular meeting held July 24, 2023

- Mr. Gates moved to approve as presented the minutes of the regular meeting held July 24, 2023. Seconded by Mr. Jefferson 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, application of Jonathan Carpenter for water line under Somerhill Road

The Board reviewed an application for installation of an underground water line under Somerhill Road. Mr. Chase reported that he had inspected the site and found it to be suitable for the proposed project.

- Mr. Gates moved to approve the application as presented. Seconded by Mr. Jefferson and approved by voice vote.

b. Consideration of, and take any action on, applications of William Graves for two Highway Access permits on West Barnet Road

The Board reviewed two applications for perpetual access for properties owned by William Graves and located along West Barnet Road. One proposed access is located on the north side of the road, 1160 feet easterly of Kid Row; the other proposed access is located on the south side of the road, 1280 easterly of Gilfillan Road. Mr. Chase reported that he had inspected both sites and found both to be suitable for the proposed access without conditions, as both are existing accesses.

- Mr. Gates moved to approve the two permit applications as proposed without conditions. Seconded by Mr. Jefferson and approved by voice vote.

c. Consideration of, and take any action on, application of William Kent for Highway Access Permit on Gadley Hill Road

The Board reviewed an application for a perpetual access for a property owned by William Kent and located along Gadley Hill Road. The proposed access is located on the left side of the road when entering from Groton Road, directly across from 234 Gadley Hill Road. Mr. Chase reported that he had inspected the site and found it to be suitable for the proposed access without condition.

- Mr. Gates moved to approve the two permit applications as proposed without conditions. Seconded by Mr. Jefferson and approved by voice vote.

d. Consideration of, and take any action on, acquisition of tablet computer and cellular service for Highway Department

Mr. Chase reported that he had met with Doug Morton of Northeastern Vermont Development Association as planned. Mr. Morton will forward the exact specifications of the required tablet, along with pricing; this should be available for the next meeting.

e. Other business

i. Grants-in-Aid

Mr. Chase reported that he had also spoken to Mr. Morton regarding Grants-in-Aid projects.

- The Board agreed to prioritize the project on South Monroe Road.

ii. Sand screening

Mr. Chase reported that the Highway Department had commenced annual sand screening the day of this meeting.

4. Consideration of, and take any action on, correspondence from Beach Committee regarding nomination for appointment of new Committee member Susan Persson

The Board reviewed an email indicating that the Beach Committee had voted to nominate Susan Persson as a member of the Beach Committee.

- Mr. Gates moved to appoint Susan Persson as a member of the Beach Committee. Seconded by Mr. Jefferson and approved by voice vote.

5. Consideration of, and take any action on, correspondence from Planning Commission/Zoning Board member Elizabeth Evans regarding resignation from Planning Commission/Zoning Board

The Board read an email indicating that Ms. Evans is resigning her position as member of the Planning Commission/Zoning Board but will continue to serve through the September 12, 2023 Board meeting if needed. Discussion ensued.

- Mr. Gates moved to accept Ms. Evans's resignation with the Selectboard's thanks for her service to the Town. Seconded by Mr. Jefferson and approved by voice vote.

6. Consideration of, and take any action on, correspondence from Zoning Administrative Officer Shirley Warden regarding zoning permit issued to abutting property owners Maureen and Jeffrey McAlpine

The Board reviewed an abutter's notice of an approved application for residential construction on Harvey Mountain Road.

7. Consideration of, and take any action on, certification of 2023 property tax rates

The Board reviewed the certification of property tax rates, as prepared by Treasurer Benjamin Heisholt, as based on the grand list, Town-approved budget, and school district tax rates per the Vermont Agency of Education. Total rates are \$2.3891 for homestead and \$2.2915 for non-homestead.

- The Board signed the rates as presented.

8. Consideration of, and take any action on, proposed Town website upgrades

The Board reviewed correspondence from website manager KeVaCo, as discussed at a previous meeting. The Board also reviewed, and Town Clerk Benjamin Heisholt discussed, correspondence from Vermont League of Cities & Towns and guidance from the United States Department of Justice regarding ADA website accessibility. Discussion ensued.

- Mr. Gates moved to approve the proposed upgrades to the Town's website at the quoted rates of a one-time fee of \$250.00 plus \$50.00 annual fee. Seconded by Mr. Jefferson and approved by voice vote.

9. Other business presented by other town officers

There was no other business presented by other town officers.

10. Consideration of, and take any action on, correspondence from Barnet Historical Society regarding display of historic road plow

The Board reviewed an email from Alan Boye of the Historical Society regarding the Board's discussion at their most recent meeting, indicating that Fire Chief Ronald Morse and Mr. Boye had agreed that the Fire & Rescue Station would not be an appropriate place to display historical items.

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

a. Progress report

Mr. Gates and Ms. Ford provided an update on progress. The details of their report can be found in the minutes of the most recent meeting of the building working group.

b. Other business

No other business was discussed.

12. Consideration of, and take any action on, correspondence from Upper Valley Habitat for Humanity in the Northeast Kingdom regarding 2024 appropriation request

The Board reviewed emails indicating that Habitat for Humanity, which requested and received an appropriation of \$500 in 2022 but did not request an appropriation in 2023, intends to request an appropriation of \$500 in 2024. Habitat for Humanity requests an exemption from the Board's requirement of a petition for new or increased appropriation requests. Resident Jay Sprout, Habitat for Humanity volunteer, appeared and discussed this matter with the Board.

- Mr. Gates moved to add Upper Valley Habitat for Humanity's appropriation request of \$500 to the warning of the 2024 annual town meeting without requirement of a petition. Seconded by Mr. Jefferson and approved by voice vote.

13. Consideration of, and take any action on, correspondence from Barnet Solar LLC regarding proposed solar project off McLam Lane

The Board reviewed a pre-petition notice regarding a proposed project. Discussion ensued.

14. Consideration of, and take any action on, replacement of fencing at Barnet Public Library
Librarian Dylan Ford reported that there was no new information to discuss or on which to take action regarding this matter.

15. Consideration of approval of outstanding check warrants

- The Board reviewed and approved all outstanding check warrants.

16. Other business presented by Selectboard

a. Correspondence from Caledonia Essex Area Ambulance Service (CALEX) regarding regional town emergency medical services (EMS) meeting

The Board reviewed an email and attached letter inviting one member of the Selectboard to attend a meeting of local officials and CALEX regarding the proposed merging of EMS services with St. Johnsbury Fire Department.

- The Board agreed that Mr. Jefferson will attend the meeting if possible.

17. Consideration of, and take any action on, zoning permit application for parcel #0014-01-70

- Mr. Gates moved that the Board make a specific finding, pursuant to 1 V.S.A. Section 313 (a)(1)(E), that premature public knowledge of discussion concerning a zoning permit application for parcel #0014-01-70 would clearly place the Town of Barnet at a substantial disadvantage. Seconded by Mr. Jefferson and approved by voice vote.
- Mr. Gates moved that the Board enter executive session pursuant to 1 V.S.A. Section 313 (a)(1)(E) to discuss a zoning permit application for parcel #0014-01-70, as premature public disclosure of which would clearly place the Town of Barnet at a substantial disadvantage. Seconded by Mr. Jefferson and approved by voice vote. Entered executive session at 7:43 p.m. Those present in executive session: Ms. Ford, Mr. Gates, Mr. Jefferson, Zoning Administrative Officer Shirley Warden, and Town Clerk Benjamin Heisholt.
- Mr. Gates moved to exit executive session. Seconded by Mr. Jefferson and approved by voice vote. Exited executive session at 7:54 p.m.
- Mr. Gates moved to authorize expenditures for Zoning Administrative Officer Shirley Warden to discuss the legal issues discussed in executive session. Seconded by Mr. Jefferson and approved by voice vote.

18. Consideration of, and take any action on, correspondence from Highway Department employee Glenn Fearon regarding fringe benefits

- Mr. Gates moved to enter executive session to discuss fringe benefits of appointed officers/employees pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3). Seconded by Mr. Jefferson and approved by voice vote. Entered executive session at 7:56 p.m. Those present in executive session: Ms. Ford, Mr. Gates, Mr. Jefferson, Road Foreman Mark Chase Town Clerk Benjamin Heisholt.
- Mr. Gates moved to exit executive session. Seconded by Mr. Jefferson and approved by voice vote. Exited executive session at 8:19 p.m.
- No action taken

19. Adjournment

- Mr. Gates moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Mr. Jefferson and approved by voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

A true copy. Attest. _____ *Town Clerk*