

DRAFT

MINUTES - REGULAR SELECTBOARD MEETING

TOWN OF BARNET, VERMONT

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

Other Town officials and employees participating in-person: Road Foreman Mark Chase, Beach Committee Member Christen Emerson, Town Clerk Benjamin Heisholt, Beach Committee Member Jennifer Kierstead, and Zoning Administrative Officer Shirley Warden.

Other Town officials and employees participating via GoToMeeting: None.

Members of the public participating in-person: Lisa Adler, Neil Glassman, Dennis McLam, Ross Page, and David Warden.

Members of the public participating via GoToMeeting: Amy Wheeler and Kathleen Monroe.

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

- Ms. Ford moved to approve as presented the minutes of the meeting held October 9, 2023. Seconded by Mr. Jefferson and approved by voice vote.

2. Annual review of Ordinance Relating to Operation of Snowmobiles Upon Town Roads; take any action

The Board continued its review of the ordinance as commenced at the previous meeting. They reviewed a request from the Bayley Hazen Road Snowmobile Club for snowmobile access for trail connection purposes during the 2023-2024 season on portions of Laird Road, Somerhill Road, Stevenson Road, and West Main Street, as has been granted in previous years. Ross Page, of the snowmobile club, appeared and discussed the request with the Board. The Board also discussed requests of previous years from the Waterford Ridge Runners for snowmobile access for trail connection purposes on a portion of Meeting House Hill. Mr. Jefferson and Town Clerk Benjamin Heisholt reported they had each spoken to Ryan Lowell of the Waterford Ridge Runners and that Mr. Lowell had indicated the Ridge Runners request access on Meeting House Hill for the 2023-2024 season. Discussion ensued regarding connection access to Meeting House Hill via Bridge Street.

- Mr. Jefferson moved to grant the Bayley-Hazen Road Snowmobile Club access as requested for Laird Road, Somerhill Road, Stevenson Road, and West Main Street and the Waterford Ridge Runners access as requested on Meeting House Hill and on Bridge Street. Seconded by Ms. Ford and approved by voice vote.

Mr. Page discussed potential changes in requested trail access for the 2024-2025 season to include a portion of Chamberlain Road. He indicated that the Bayley-Hazen Snowmobile may need to make improvements to the Class 4 road to make it suitable for snowmobile travel.

- The Board agreed to grant permission to the Bayley-Hazen Snowmobile Club to make improvements to a Class 4 portion of Chamberlain Road.

3. Other business presented by members of the public

a. Appearance by Kathleen Monroe regarding West Barnet village intersection

The Board reviewed an email from Ms. Monroe indicating that Ms. Monroe recently experienced a near-collision at the intersection of West Main Street and Harvey Mountain Road in West Barnet; the email requests that the Board consider road surface signage to mitigate risk of future collisions. Discussion ensued.

- The Board agreed to inquire with the Town of Peacham regarding their signage at a similar intersection and consider signage options for the West Main Street/Harvey Mountain Road intersection.

4. Appearance by Beach Committee regarding Harvey’s Lake Beach matters; take any action

Beach Committee members Christen Emerson and Jennifer Kierstead appeared and discussed the below-described matters with the Board:

a. Consideration of, and take any action on, 2024 budget

The Beach Committee presented a proposed budget with total expenditures of \$26,750 and total revenues of \$11,500.

b. Consideration of, and take any action on, 2023 budget net income

The Beach Committee asked if the Board would consider re-directing any Beach “net income” (annual actual revenues less annual actual expenditures) into the Beach reserve fund. Discussion ensued.

c. Consideration of, and take any action on, bid(s) for fence repair

The Beach Committee reported that they had received a quote of \$1,000 for repair of the chain-link fencing around the perimeter of the beach property.

- The Board requested that the Beach Committee include this expense in their 2024 budget under “General Maintenance” expenditures.

d. Consideration of, and take any action on, 2024 mowing bids

The Beach Committee asked how the Board would like to approach solicitation of bids for 2024 Beach mowing.

- The Board agreed that contracting for mowing at the Beach should be separate from the mowing bid process for the rest of the Town’s properties. The Board agreed to instruct the Beach Committee to conduct its own bidding process according to the Beach Committee’s specifications.

e. Other business

i. Beach hours

The Beach Committee indicated that it is considering changing the hours of operation of the beach for the 2024 season.

- The Board agreed that the Beach Committee has the authority to change beach hours without Selectboard approval.

ii. Fees

The Beach Committee indicated that it is considering changing the entry fees of the beach for the 2024 season.

- The Board agreed that the Beach Committee has the authority to change beach entry fees without Selectboard approval.

iii. Exterminator

The Beach Committee reported that a beach house appears to have unidentified insects causing damage to woodwork. An exterminating service seems to be required; a quote has not yet been obtained.

- The Board agreed to request that the Beach Committee obtain a quote to be used for 2024 budgeting and that this planned expenditure should be added to the Beach’s 2024 budget under “General Maintenance” expenditures.

iv. Beach house sink

The Beach Committee reported that the sink in the office area of the beach house requires repair; the cost estimate is \$200.00.

- The Board agreed to approve expenditures for the proposed repair, to be paid from the Municipal Buildings Fund.

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

a. Consideration of, and take any action on, application for Highway Access Permit of Peter Lewis for access on Warden Road

The Board reviewed an application for a permit for a permanent access on the south/west side of Warden Road near its intersection with Barnet Center Road. Mr. Chase indicated that he had not inspected the site and that Mr. Lewis must mark the proposed access on site to make clear its exact location.

- The Board agreed to table this matter.

b. Consideration of, and take any action on, application for Highway Access Permit of Louis Bushey for access on Harvey Mountain Road

The Board reviewed an application for a permit for permanent access across the road from 802 Harvey Mountain Road. Mr. Chase reported that he had inspected the site and found it to be a suitable location for an access. Mr. Chase recommended approval.

- The Board agreed to approve the permit; Mr. Gates signed the permit.

c. Other business

i. Routine autumn road maintenance

Mr. Chase reported that the Highway Department has been spending much of its time recently performing routine maintenance such as cleaning ditches, blowing leaves, etc.

ii. Warden Road bridge

Shirley Warden indicated that there is a hole on a bridge on Warden Road south of Warden Farm Road.

- Mr. Chase agreed to inspect and assess the site.

6. Consideration of, and take any action on, appointment to fill vacancy on Planning Commission/Zoning Board

Zoning Administrative Officer Shirley Warden indicated that there was no new information to discuss or on which to take action regarding this matter.

- No action taken.

7. Consideration of, and take any action on, appointment to fill vacancy on Dam Committee
Ms. Ford indicated that there was no new information to discuss or on which to take action regarding this matter.

- No action taken.

8. Other business presented by other town officers

a. Appearance by Town Health Officer Dylan Ford regarding Slayton Lane inspection

Ms. Ford reported on her health inspection of a property owned by Wayne Berge and Jan Sherman and located on Slayton Lane.

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

a. Progress report

Ms. Ford reported that Estes & Gallup has been on site at the Town Hall in recent days. She reported that a qualified masonry contractor had filled the gaps in the foundation that had accommodated I-beams during movement of the building and that the foundation is now receiving sealing treatment. Backfilling of the foundation is expected to commence soon.

b. Consideration of, and take any action, design decision on inclusion or exclusion of ramps, steps, and railings for exterior access

Mr. Gates discussed a design decision to be made regarding inclusion or exclusion of ramps, steps, and railings for exterior access. He indicated that because the building is slightly lower on its new foundation than originally anticipated, the option to exclude ramps, steps, railings, etc. is now available. The Board reviewed plans showing design alternatives.

- The Board agreed that it would prefer to exclude ramps, steps, railings, etc. if possible.

c. Other business

i. Permitting

Mr. Gates indicated that the project continues to await approval of State of Vermont Fire and Safety permitting.

10. Consideration of, and take any action on, correspondence from Northeast Kingdom Broadband (NEK Broadband)

The Board reviewed a letter and attachments from Neil Glassman, Barnet Representative to NEK Broadband. The documents detail the progress of NEK Broadband in making broadband service available to addresses in Barnet. Mr. Glassman appeared and presented the NEK Broadband annual report and discussed these matters with the Board.

11. Consideration of, and take any action on, correspondence from Caledonia County Sheriff's Office with proposed 2024 service contract

The Board reviewed a letter and attached proposed contract. The letter indicates that the hourly rate for patrols will increase from \$39.00 to \$42.00 per hour, inclusive of evening and Saturday hours. The letter also indicates there will not be an added dispatch fee unless patrols are requested before 8 a.m. or after 5:30 p.m. on weekdays.

- The Board agreed to sign the service contract, specifying a budget of \$7,500 for the contract year. Mr. Gates signed the contract.

12. Consideration of, and take any action on, correspondence from Vermont League of Cities & Towns regarding Municipal Technical Assistance Program (MTAP)

The Board reviewed an email and attachments advising that the Town is preapproved to receive free priority grant writing assistance through MTAP. Discussion ensued.

- No action taken.

13. Consideration of, and take any action on, appointment of Animal Control Officer

Ms. Ford indicated that there was no new information to discuss or on which to take action regarding this matter.

- No action taken.

14. Consideration of, and take any action on, replacement of fencing at Barnet Public Library

Librarian Ms. Ford indicated that there was no new information to discuss or on which to take action regarding this matter.

- No action taken.

15. Consideration of, and take any action on, 2024 health insurance benefits

The Board reviewed 2024 health insurance plan summaries from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Vermont (BCBS) and MVP Health Care (MVP). They also reviewed a report from Treasurer Benjamin Heisholt that indicates the costs of the 2023 Town health plan from BlueCross BlueShield of Vermont (BCBS) and projects the costs of 2024 plans for BCBS and MVP Health Care (MVP). The Town's total annual expense for 2024, with the current benefit offering, under the BCBS plan would represent an increase from 2023 of \$14,057.24, and under the MVP plan would represent an increase from 2022 of \$10,214.71. Discussion ensued.

- Ms. Ford moved to continue to offer the BCBS Platinum Standard Plan. Seconded by Mr. Jefferson and approved by voice vote.
- Ms. Ford moved to continue to offer a HealthEquity health reimbursement account with an annual maximum reimbursement of \$2,500 for each eligible employee. Seconded by Mr. Jefferson and approved by voice vote.

16. Consideration of, and take any action on, correspondence from Vermont League of Cities & Towns regarding disability insurance quotes

The Board reviewed quotes for short-term and long-term disability insurance, as the Board had requested from Vermont League of Cities & Towns. The approximate annual premium for short-term coverage is \$1,080.00; for long-term coverage the approximate annual premium is \$691.00. Discussion ensued.

- No action taken.

17. Consideration of approval of outstanding check warrants

- The Board reviewed and approved all outstanding check warrants.

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

- Ms. Ford 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.

- Ms. Ford 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 8:27 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 8:45 p.m.

19. Other business presented by Selectboard

a. Veteran's plaque

Ms. Ford discussed the new plaque for Soldiers' Monument in Barnet Village. She indicated that the plaque had been delivered but had not yet been installed.

- The Board agreed that Ms. Ford will call Gandin Brothers in South Ryegate regarding installation.

20. Adjournment

- Mr. Jefferson moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Ms. Ford and approved by voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

A true copy. Attest: _____ *Town Clerk*