

## MINUTES – REGULAR SELECTBOARD MEETING

### TOWN OF BARNET, VERMONT

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2024

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 Benjamin Adams.
- **Via GoToMeeting online video conference:** None.

#### Other Town officials and employees participating:

- **In-person:** Collector of Delinquent Tax Lisa Bowden, Road Foreman Mark Chase, and Town Clerk Benjamin Heisholt.
- **Via GoToMeeting online video conference:** None.

#### Members of the public participating:

- **In-person:** None.
- **Via GoToMeeting online video conference:** “Chase,” Karen Kotecki, and “Mona.”

#### Approval of Minutes

##### 1. **Consideration of approval of minutes of regular meeting held October 28, 2024**

Mr. Adams moved to approve as presented the minutes of the regular meeting held October 28, 2024. Seconded by Ms. Ford and approved by voice vote.

#### Appearances by Members of the Public

##### 2. **Other business presented by members of the public**

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

#### Appearances by Town Officers

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

###### a. **Consideration of, and take any action on, correspondence from Northeast Kingdom Broadband regarding proposed underground conduit at three (3) town highway locations**

The Board reviewed applications and maps for installation of conduit under town highway rights of way at three sites. These are areas where there are gaps in the existing utility pole lines on Harvey Mountain Road, Morses Mill Road, and County Hill Road. Karen Kotecki of NEK Broadband appeared remotely via GoToMeeting and discussed the proposed installations with the Board.

- Ms. Ford moved to approve the proposed underground conduit installations on County Hill Road and Morses Mill Road and to request further information regarding the proposed installation at Harvey Mountain Road. Seconded by Mr. Adams and approved by voice vote.

**b. Consideration of, and take any action on, application of Paul Ugo for Highway Access Permit on Joe's Brook Road**

The Board reviewed an application for a permanent driveway access. Mr. Chase reported that he had inspected the site and found it suitable for the proposed use. A culvert of at least fifteen inches in diameter is recommended.

- Ms. Ford moved to approve the permit application with the condition of the installation of a culvert of at least fifteen inches in diameter. Seconded by Mr. Adams and approved by voice vote.

**c. Consideration of, and take any action on, road repairs in connection with July 2024 flooding event**

Mr. Chase reported that progress continues on larger projects. Mathews Excavating is working on Comerford Dam Road at this time.

**d. Other business**

**i. Winter preparations**

Mr. Chase reported that the Highway Department has been working, in various efforts, to prepare for winter road maintenance.

**ii. Truck budgeting**

Mr. Gates requested that Mr. Chase seek pricing for a new dump truck for 2025 budgeting purposes.

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

There was no other business presented by other town officers.

New Business

**5. Consideration of, and take any action on, borrowing for flood recovery expenses**

The Board reviewed a cash flow analysis prepared by Treasurer Benjamin Heisholt. This indicates that the Town has expended cash resources for flood recovery projects in approximately the same amount as was held as General Fund surplus at the start of 2024 (\$1,062,764.31). Other flood-related unexpended but obligated accounts payable total approximately \$750,000. The Town will require financing to bridge from the present time to receipt of reimbursement funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Discussion ensued.

- The Board agreed to request proposals for a line of credit in the amount of \$1,500,000.

**6. Other business presented by Selectboard**

There was no other business presented by the Selectboard.

Old/Continuing Business

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

**a. Progress report**

Mr. Gates indicated that construction is nearly complete and that remaining tasks involve proposed change orders Mr. Gates has been discussing with construction manager Estes & Gallup and architect Black River Design; these include installation of the fire suppression system for the vault and painting of the lower vault storage space. A change in exterior paint application and cost is also a matter of discussion and negotiation regarding proposed change orders. Discussion ensued.

**b. Other business**

**i. Communications system**

The Board discussed installation of a telephone communications system.

- The Board agreed to contact Valhalla Corporation regarding the installation of a communications system.

**8. Consideration of, and take any action on, revision of Animal Control Ordinance**

- The Board agreed to table discussion of this matter.

**9. Consideration of, and take any action on, 2025 health insurance benefits**

The Board reviewed 2025 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 indicating costs of the current 2024 Town health plan from BlueCross BlueShield of Vermont (BCBS) and projecting the costs of 2024 plans for BCBS and MVP Health Care (MVP).

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Town's total annual expense for 2025, with the current benefit offering, under the BCBS plan would represent an increase from 2024 of \$20,852.52, and under the MVP plan would represent an increase from 2024 of \$7,178.96. Discussion ensued.

- Ms. Ford moved to continue to offer the BCBS Platinum Standard Plan. Seconded by Mr. Adams 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. Adams and approved by voice vote.

Check Warrants

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

- The Board reviewed and approved all outstanding check warrants.

Executive Session(s)

**11. Consideration of, and take any action on, proposed delinquent tax enforced collection**

- 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 proposed delinquent tax enforced collection would clearly place the Town of Barnet at a substantial disadvantage. Seconded by Mr. Adams 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 proposed delinquent tax enforced collection, as premature public disclosure of which would clearly place the Town of Barnet at a substantial disadvantage. Seconded by Mr. Adams and approved by voice vote. Entered executive session at 8:13 p.m. Those present in executive session: Ms. Ford, Mr. Gates, Mr. Adams, Collector of Delinquent Tax Lisa Bowden, and Town Clerk Benjamin Heisholt
- Ms. Ford moved to exit executive session. Seconded by Mr. Gates and approved by voice vote. Exited executive session at 8:48 p.m.
- No action taken.

Adjournment

**12. Adjournment**

- Ms. Ford moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Mr. Adams and approved by voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 8:48 p.m.

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