

MINUTES – REGULAR SELECTBOARD MEETING

TOWN OF BARNET, VERMONT

MONDAY, DECEMBER 9, 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:** Lister John Fairchild, Town Clerk Benjamin Heisholt, Fire & Rescue Chief Ronald Morse, Fire & Rescue member David Shields, Lister Celina Wright, and Zoning Administrative Officer Shirley Warden.
- **Via GoToMeeting online video conference:** Flood Recovery Fund Advisory Committee members Kyle Berge, Caroline DeMaio, and Jan Parsons.

Members of the public participating:

- **In-person:** None.
- **Via GoToMeeting online video conference:** Mona Marceau.

Approval of Minutes

1. Consideration of approval of minutes of regular meeting held November 25, 2024

- Ms. Ford moved to approve as presented the minutes of the meeting held November 25, 2024. Seconded by Mr. Adams and approved by voice vote.

Appearances by Members of the Public

2. Appearance by James and Denise Day regarding flood damage to private property; take any action

Mr. and Ms. Day did not appear at this meeting. In their absence, Fire & Rescue Chief Ronald Morse appeared and discussed their application for funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for repair and mitigation of damages to their property on Garland Hill, which was damaged in the July 2024 flood and is threatened for future damages by run-off from an adjacent property. Chief Morse has met with Mr. and Ms. Day and FEMA officials. There may be eligibility for funding available only as a pass-through to the Days using the Town as the applicant. Chief Morse is awaiting further information from Northeastern Vermont Development Agency.

3. Other business presented by members of the public

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

Appearances by Town Officers

4. Appearance by Fire & Rescue Department regarding bids for new truck body; take any action

The Board reviewed bids for a Dodge Ram 5500 truck body, as summarized below:

- Desorcie Emergency Products: \$75,114

- CET Fire Rescue Truck: \$77,720.00
- Dingee Machine Company: \$93,500

Fire & Rescue Department members Ronald Morse and David Shields appeared and discussed the bids with the Board.

- Mr. Adams moved to accept the proposal of Desorcie Emergency Products for the purchase of a truck body for \$75,114. Seconded by Ms. Ford and approved by voice vote.

5. Appearance by Flood Recovery Fund Advisory Committee regarding final report; take any action

The Board reviewed a report documenting the Advisory Committee’s completed process of accepting almost \$44,000 in donations and disbursing these funds to community members in need following the July 2024 flood event. Members Jan Parsons, Kyle Berge, and Caroline DeMaio appeared remotely and discussed the project with the Board. The Board thanked the members of the Committee for their efforts in assisting community members.

6. Appearance by Board of Listers regarding consideration of proposals for townwide reappraisal; take any action

The Board reviewed a proposal received from New England Municipal Resource Center (NEMRC). The Board noted a request for proposals was also sent to New England Municipal Consultants, who declined to submit a proposal. NEMRC’s proposal quotes a total reappraisal cost of \$129,600. Listers John Fairchild and Celina Wright appeared and discussed the proposal with the Board; the Listers recommended the acceptance of NEMRC’s proposal.

- Ms. Ford moved to accept the proposal of NEMRC. Seconded by Mr. Adams and approved by voice vote.

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

Mr. Chase did not appear at this meeting. In his absence the Board discussed the below-described matters.

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

Mr. Gates noted that the flood recovery road repairs are completed for the season. A few bridge projects remain to be completed in 2025.

b. Consideration of, and take any action on, invoice from S.D. Ireland for flood repairs to Church Street, Mill Hill, and Monument Circle

The Board reviewed an invoice and cost breakdown for a large project for repair of July 2024 flood damages. Total cost is \$307,232.96. Discussion ensued.

- The Board agreed to approve payment of the invoice.

c. Other business

i. Flood administrative consultant

The Board discussed hiring a consultant to assist with administrative tasks associated with reimbursement funding from Federal Emergency Management Agency and Federal Highway Administration.

- The Board agreed that Ms. Ford will request a list of potential consultants from Northeastern Vermont Development Association.

8. Other business presented by other town officers

There was no other business presented by other town officers.

New Business

9. Consideration of, and take any action on, 2024 year-end employee bonuses

The Board reviewed minutes of the Board meeting held December 11, 2023, which indicate that the Board had agreed to pay 2023 year-end bonuses of \$500 to full-time employees, \$300 to Assistant Town Clerk Catherine Roy, \$150 each to part-time Highway Department Employees Paul Gibson and Steve Mosher, and \$175 each to Transfer Station/Recycling Center employees Daniel Ehlers, Bruce Marston, Donald Nelson, and Shirley Warden. These were the same bonuses as approved in 2022. Discussion ensued.

- Mr. Adams moved to pay 2024 year-end bonuses of \$500 to full-time employees, \$300 to Assistant Town Clerk Catherine Roy, \$150 each to part-time Highway Department Employees Paul Gibson and Steve Mosher, and \$175 each to Transfer Station/Recycling Center employees Daniel Ehlers, Bruce Marston, Donald Nelson, and Shirley Warden. Seconded by Ms. Ford and approved by voice vote.

10. Other business presented by Selectboard

There was no other business presented by the Selectboard.

Old/Continuing Business

11. Consideration of, and take any action on, execution of documents for borrowing for flood recovery expenses

The Board reviewed documents related to flood recovery expense borrowing from Passumpsic Bank.

- The Board signed the documents.

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

a. Progress report

The Board discussed recent developments in completing the project, including curing a problem with the dehumidifier in the vault and plans for delivery and installation of storm windows.

b. Other business

No other business was discussed.

13. Consideration of, and take any action on, amendment of Animal Control Ordinance

The Board reviewed the draft amendment prepared by Town Attorney Steven Adler, pursuant to 24 App. V.S.A. ch. 149, § 5.

- Mr. Ford moved to adopt and approve the ordinance as amended pursuant to 24 App. V.S.A. ch. 149, § 5. Seconded by Mr. Adams and approved by voice vote.

Check Warrants

14. Consideration of approval of outstanding check warrants

- The Board reviewed and approved all outstanding check warrants.

Anticipated Executive Session(s)

15. Consideration of, and take any action on, animal control order enforcement

- Mr. Adams 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 animal control order enforcement would clearly place the Town of Barnet at a substantial disadvantage. Seconded by Ms. Ford and approved by voice vote.

- Mr. Adams moved that the Board enter executive session pursuant to 1 V.S.A. Section 313(a)(1)(E) to discuss animal control order enforcement, as premature public disclosure of which would clearly place the Town of Barnet at a substantial disadvantage. Seconded by Ms. Ford and approved by voice vote. Entered executive session at 7:55 p.m. Those present in executive session: Ms. Ford, Mr. Gates, Mr. Adams, and Town Clerk Benjamin Heisholt
- Ms. Ford moved to exit executive session. Seconded by Mr. Adams and approved by voice vote. Exited executive session at 8:03 p.m.
- Ms. Ford moved to request that Town Attorney Steven Adler draft and send via Sheriff's service or registered/certified mail a letter to the attorney for the owner of property at 32 Bridge Street where a dog owned by Anders Hahr is kenneled, stating that the Board intends to seek funds for enforcement of an animal control order through a homeowner's insurance claim. Seconded by Mr. Adams and approved by voice vote.

16. Consideration of, and take any action on, contract negotiations regarding Town Hall project

The Board noted that the structure of a staged plan for completion of the project under the terms of an agreed-upon change order has been agreed upon.

Budget

17. Consideration of, and take any action on, 2025 Town General Fund budget

The Board began review of the first draft of a 2025 General Fund budget.

Adjournment

18. Adjournment

- Ms. Ford moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Mr. Adams and approved by voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

A true copy. Attest: _____ Town Clerk