

MINUTES – REGULAR SELECTBOARD MEETING
TOWN OF BARNET, VERMONT
MONDAY, JANUARY 13, 2025

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, Town Clerk Benjamin Heisholt, and Zoning Administrative Officer Shirley Warden.
- **Via GoToMeeting online video conference:** None.

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 December 23, 2024

- Ms. Ford moved to approve as presented the minutes of the regular meeting held December 23, 2024. Seconded by Mr. Adams 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, applications for Uniform Municipal Excess Weight Permits

- The Board reviewed and approved the single vehicle application of Z. Lemieux & Son Trucking, LLC.

b. Consideration of, and take any action on, correspondence from Vermont Agency of Transportation regarding 2025 mileage certificate

The Board reviewed a 2025 certificate of highway mileage, which indicates all mileages as unchanged from 2024, at 0.00 miles of Class 1, 23.51 miles of Class 2, 58.46 miles of Class 3, 21.19 miles of state highway, 0.00 miles of Class 1 lane, 10.95 miles of Class 4, and 0.09 miles of legal trail.

- The Board agreed to sign the certificate; the Board signed the certificate.

c. Other business

i. Loader repairs

Mr. Chase reported that the new loader is currently out of commission; it is at Anderson Equipment for repairs.

ii. Flood reimbursement work

Mr. Chase reported that the Highway Department has been compiling data for reporting to the Federal Emergency Management Agency for reimbursement of flood expenses. This work has included collecting GPS coordinates for all damage locations.

iii. Quotes for new dump truck

Mr. Chase reported that quotes for a new dump truck are beginning to be received.

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, correspondence from Barnet Fire & Rescue regarding nomination of Fire Chief

The Board reviewed a letter submitting the name of Ronald Morse for the position of Fire Chief for 2025.

- Ms. Ford moved to appoint Ronald Morse to the position of Fire Chief for the year 2025. Seconded by Mr. Gates and approved by voice vote.

6. Consideration of, and take any action on, correspondence from Vermont Department of Taxes regarding 2024 equalization study results

The Board reviewed the study results, as summarized below:

- Education Grand List: \$249,757,200
- Equalized Education Grand List: \$352,787,334
- Common Level of Appraisal (CLA): 79.80 or 0.7080
- Coefficient of Dispersion (COD): 20.88%

7. Consideration of, and take any action on, correspondence from Zoning Administrative Officer regarding permit issued for Harvey's Lake Beach

The Board reviewed a letter and attached permit copy, indicating that the Beach's application for a permit to repair July 2024 flood damage, including the parking lot and Harvey's Lake frontage, has been approved and will be effective January 17, 2025.

8. Consideration of, and take any action on, Zoning Bylaw enforcement for parcel #0014-01-70

Zoning Administrative Officer Shirley Warden appeared and discussed enforcement actions. She indicated that she had viewed the property on January 1 and found that the owners had not complied with the zoning enforcement action. She reported that she had sent the owners a letter indicating applicable fines for non-compliance.

9. Consideration of, and take any action on, proposals for 2025 tax anticipation borrowing

The Board reviewed bids for tax anticipation borrowing for calendar year 2025. Bids received are summarized below.

<u>Amount</u>	<u>Loan Rate</u>	<u>Deposit Rate</u>	<u>Line of Credit Rate</u>
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Community Bank	\$531,346.28	No bid	No bid	5.280%
Community Nat'l Bank	\$531,346.28	3.750%	3.950%	5.450%
Mascoma Bank	\$531,346.28	No bid	No bid	6.350%
Passumpsic Bank:	\$531,346.28	3.700%	3.950%	4.720%
Union Bank:	\$531,346.28	3.250%	3.561%	5.990%

Treasurer Benjamin Heisholt presented an analysis of anticipated interest costs and earnings for each of the bids. Discussion ensued.

- Mr. Adams moved to accept the bid of Passumpsic Bank for a lump-sum loan of \$531,346.28 at a rate of 3.700% with reinvestment of proceeds in a deposit account with a rate of 3.950%. Seconded by Ms. Ford and approved by voice vote.

10. Consideration of, and take any action on, correspondence from CALEX Ambulance Service regarding 2025 contract

The Board reviewed an Ambulance Service Agreement as proposed by CALEX. There are no changes to the contract as compared with the 2024 contract.

- The Board signed the agreement.

11. Consideration of, and take any action on, assessment of penalties for late filed 2025 homestead declarations

The Board reviewed its decisions from 2017 through 2024, when it agreed to apply penalties in the maximum percentages allowable pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 5410(g). Treasurer Benjamin Heisholt reviewed the content of 32 V.S.A. § 5410(g), which indicates that under certain circumstances related to homestead declaration filings, a revised property tax bill may "...as determined by the governing body of the municipality, include a penalty of up to three percent of the education tax on the property. However, if the property incorrectly declared as a homestead is located in a municipality that has a lower homestead tax rate than the nonhomestead tax rate or if an undeclared homestead is located in a municipality that has a lower nonhomestead tax rate than the homestead tax rate, then the governing body of the municipality may include a penalty of up to eight percent of the education tax liability on the property." These penalties would apply to the revised tax bill of an owner who files a homestead declaration on property that does not meet the criteria of a homestead or of an owner who fails to file a homestead declaration on a property that does meet the criteria of a homestead. Mr. Heisholt asked the Board how they would like to proceed regarding these penalties in 2025. Discussion ensued.

- Ms. Ford moved to apply penalties in 2025 in the maximum percentages allowable pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 5410(g). Seconded by Mr. Adams and approved by voice vote.

12. Consideration of, and take any action on, proposed renewal of lease of library building space to Karne Choling

The Board reviewed a proposed two-year lease renewal with the same terms as the current two-year lease expiring February 1, 2025.

- The Board signed the lease renewal as proposed.

13. Other business presented by Selectboard

a. Harvey's Lake Beach grant

Ms. Ford discussed a tree-planting grant for which the Beach Committee is considering applying.

Old/Continuing Business

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

a. Progress report

Mr. Gates provided a report on recent progress. He indicated there is no requirement for holes to be bored for electrical installation for the fire suppression system in the vault; consequently, the project should move along quickly and be completed in a few weeks.

b. Consideration of, and take any action on, hiring Town Hall cleaning service

The Board reviewed applications for the Town Hall cleaning service position. Discussion ensued.

c. Other business

No other business was discussed.

15. Consideration of, and take any action on, adoption of amended Animal Control Ordinance

The Board reviewed the amended Animal Control Ordinance as prepared by Town Attorney Steven Adler.

- Ms. Ford moved to adopt as presented the amended Animal Control Ordinance. Seconded by Mr. Adams and approved by voice vote. The Board signed the adopted ordinance.

Check Warrants

16. Consideration of approval of outstanding check warrants

- The Board reviewed and approved all outstanding check warrants.

Executive Session(s) Anticipated

17. Consideration of, and take any action on, 2025 Town employee wage adjustments

- Ms. Ford moved to enter executive session to discuss employee wage adjustments pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3). Seconded by Mr. Adams and approved by voice vote. Entered executive session at 7:30 p.m. Those present in executive session: Ms. Ford, Mr. Gates, Mr. Adams, Road Foreman Mark Chase, 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 7:50 p.m.
- No action taken.

18. 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 7:50 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 8:04 p.m.
- No action taken.

19. Consideration of, and take any action on, 2025 Town employee wage adjustments (continued)

- Mr. Gates moved to enter executive session to discuss employee wage adjustments pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3). Seconded by Ms. Ford and approved by voice vote. Entered executive session at 8:05 p.m. Those present in executive session: Ms. Ford, Mr. Gates, Mr. Adams, Road Foreman Mark Chase, 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 9:09 p.m.
- Rates as discussed in executive session approved.

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

- 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 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. Gates 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 9:09 p.m. Those present in executive session: Ms. Ford, Mr. Gates, Mr. Adams, and Town Clerk Benjamin Heisholt
- Mr. Gates moved to exit executive session. Seconded by Ms. Ford and approved by voice vote. Exited executive session at 9:12 p.m.
- Mr. Gates moved to approve the extension of the deadline for the dog owner to pay the veterinary expenses of the complainant to the end of February 2025. Seconded by Mr. Adams and approved by voice vote.

Budget

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

The Board continued their review of the 2025 General Fund budget, adjusting various line items.

Adjournment

22. Adjournment

- Ms. Ford moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Mr. Adams and approved by voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 9:49 p.m.

A true copy. Attest: _____ *Town Clerk*