

MINUTES – REGULAR SELECTBOARD MEETING

TOWN OF BARNET, VERMONT

MONDAY, 12 JANUARY 2026

Meeting convened at 7:00 p.m. in-person at Barnet Town Hall (154 Church Street) 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 Benjamin Adams.
- **Via GoToMeeting online video conference:** None.

Other Town officials and employees participating:

- **In-person:** 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:** Mona Marceau.

Approval of Minutes

1. **Consideration of approval of minutes of regular meeting held 22 December 2025**

- Mr. Gates moved to approve as presented the minutes of the regular meeting held 22 December 2025. Seconded by Mr. Adams and approved by voice vote.

2. **Consideration of approval of minutes of special meeting held 8 January 2026**

- Mr. Gates moved to approve as presented the minutes of the special meeting held 8 January 2026. Seconded by Mr. Adams and approved by voice vote.

Appearances by Members of the Public

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 Road Foreman Mark Chase regarding Highway Department matters; take any action**

a. **Consideration of, and take any action on, correspondence from Vermont Agency of Transportation regarding 2026 mileage certificate**

The Board reviewed a 2026 certificate of highway mileage, which indicates all mileages as unchanged from 2025, 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.

b. **Consideration of, and take any action on, progress report on reimbursement funding for July 2024 flooding disaster**

Town Clerk Benjamin Heisholt and Mr. Chase reported that there was no new information to discuss or on which to take action regarding this matter.

- No action taken.

c. Other business

i. Routine winter maintenance

Mr. Chase reported that the Highway Department has been spending much of its recent time performing routine winter road maintenance such as plowing, sanding, and salting.

ii. Salt supply

Mr. Chase reported that road salt continues to be in short supply; the Town Garage is out of salt at the time of this meeting.

5. Other business presented by other town officers

There was no other business presented by other town officers.

New Business

6. Consideration of, and take any action on, proposals for 2026 tax anticipation borrowing

The Board reviewed bids for tax anticipation borrowing for calendar year 2026. Bids received are summarized below.

	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Loan Rate</u>	<u>Deposit Rate</u>	<u>Line of Credit Rate</u>
Community Bank	\$617,115.99	No bid	No bid	4.790%
Community Nat'l Bank	\$617,115.99	3.530%	3.830%	5.080%
Mascoma Bank	\$617,115.99	No bid	No bid	5.250%
Passumpsic Bank:	\$617,115.99	3.460%	3.700%	4.140%
Union Bank:	\$617,115.99	3.000%	3.250%	5.990%

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

- Mr. Gates moved to accept the bid of Community National Bank for a lump-sum loan of \$617,115.99 at a rate of 3.530% with reinvestment of proceeds in a deposit account with a rate of 3.830%. Seconded by Mr. Adams and approved by voice vote.

7. Consideration of, and take any action on, correspondence from Fire & Rescue Department regarding nomination of Fire Chief

The Board reviewed a letter submitting the name of Ronald Morse for the position of Fire Chief for 2026.

- Mr. Gates moved to appoint Ronald Morse to the position of Fire Chief for the year 2026. Seconded by Mr. Adams and approved by voice vote.

8. Consideration of, and take any action on, correspondence from Vermont Department of Taxes regarding 2025 equalization study results

The Board reviewed the study results, which were as summarized below:

Education Grand List: \$251,530,136
Equalized Education Grand List: \$374,067,992
Common Level of Appraisal (CLA): 67.24% or 0.6724
Coefficient of Dispersion (COD): 21.58%

9. Consideration of, and take any action on, assessment of penalties for late filed 2026 homestead declarations

The Board reviewed its decisions from 2017 through 2025, 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 2026. Discussion ensued.

- Mr. Gates moved to apply penalties in 2026 in the maximum percentages allowable pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 5410(g). Seconded by Mr. Adams and approved by voice vote.

10. Consideration of, and take any action on, Town Hall alarm system service agreement from Alarmco, Inc.

The Board reviewed the proposed service agreement; total annual price is \$400.

- The Board agreed to sign the agreement; Ms. Ford signed the agreement.

11. Other business presented by Selectboard

a. Anderson Street property proposed sale

The Board reviewed correspondence from resident Michael Gibson proposing his purchase of the Town-owned property located on Anderson Street, as has been discussed in previous Board meetings. The letter contains an offer to purchase the property for \$5,000.

Discussion ensued.

- The Board noted that, because this item was not warned, no official Board action could be taken. The Board agreed to add this matter to the agenda of its next regular meeting.

Old/Continuing Business

12. Consideration of, and take any action on, sale of former Town Clerk's Office at 1743 US Route 5 South

Mr. Adams discussed his communications with real estate agent Tim Scott. Mr. Scott reports that there has been little interest in the property of late; he suggests the Board wait until spring before considering any changes.

- No action taken.

Check Warrants

13. Consideration of approval of outstanding check warrants

- The Board reviewed and approved all outstanding check warrants.

Executive Session(s) Anticipated

14. Consideration of, and take any action on, 2026 Town employee wage adjustments (executive session anticipated pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3))

- Mr. Gates 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 7:16 p.m. Those present in executive session: Ms. Ford, Mr. Gates, Mr. Adams, Road Foreman Mark Chase, and Town Clerk Benjamin Heisholt.

- Mr. Gates moved to exit executive session. Seconded by Mr. Adams and approved by voice vote. Exited executive session at 7:49 p.m.
- No action taken (see #16 below).

Budget

15. Consideration of, and take any action on, 2026 Town General Fund budget

The Board continued reviewing and revising the 2026 General Fund budget.

Executive Session(s) Anticipated (continued)

16. Consideration of, and take any action on, 2026 Town employee wage adjustments (executive session anticipated pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3)) (continued)

- Mr. Gates 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 8:37 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 Mr. Adams and approved by voice vote. Exited executive session at 8:57 p.m.
- Mr. Gates moved to approve the wage rate adjustments as discussed in executive session. Seconded by Mr. Adams and approved by voice vote.

Adjournment

17. Adjournment

- Mr. Gates moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Mr. Adams and approved by voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

A true copy. Attest: _____ *Town Clerk*