

MINUTES – SPECIAL SELECTBOARD MEETING
TOWN OF BARNET, VERMONT
WEDNESDAY, 19 AUGUST 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:** Town Clerk Benjamin Heisholt and Road Foreman Mark Chase.
- **Via GoToMeeting online video conference:** None.

Members of the public participating:

- **In-person:** Leland Alper, Lisa Bowden, Carolyn Bruckner, Susan Chandler, Susan Jensen, and Rebecca Pedersen.
- **Via GoToMeeting online video conference:** Robert Blechl, Elizabeth Medina, and Michael Miller.

Approval of Minutes

1. Consideration of approval of minutes of regular meeting held 27 July 2026

- Mr. Gates moved to approve as presented the minutes of the regular meeting held 27 July 2026. Seconded by Mr. Adams and approved by voice vote.

Appearances by Members of the Public

2. Other business presented by members of the public

a. Appearances by Church Street residents and West Main Street resident regarding speed of traffic on Church Street and West Main Street

Residents of Church Street, Lisa Bowden, Susan Chandler, and Rebecca Pedersen, and resident of West Main Street, Susan Jensen, appeared and voiced concerns about speed of traffic on their respective streets. Discussion ensued. Various proposed solutions were discussed, including relocating existing radar speed signs, speed bumps, increased enforcement, and speed data collection.

- The Board agreed to instruct the Highway Department to change the locations of the radar speed signs on Church Street and West Main Street and to study speed data collected from these signs.

b. Appearance by resident Carolyn Bruckner regarding shoulder of West Barnet Road

Ms. Bruckner appeared and reported that the road shoulder near her home has a steep and dangerous drop-off following recent paving work. The area is marked with caution cones now; she asked if further action will be taken to improve safety.

- Road Foreman Mark Chase reported that the Highway Department will build out the shoulder to improve safety later this year.

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 Vermont Agency of Transportation with recommendation of closure of Bridge #42 on Garland Hill

i. Consideration of, and take any action on, installation of temporary bridge

Mr. Chase reported that there was no new information to discuss or upon which to take action regarding this matter.

- No action taken.

ii. Consideration of, and take any action on, planning for repairs or replacement of existing bridge structure

Mr. Chase reported that there was no new information to discuss or upon which to take action regarding this matter. He indicated that the next steps are for Ruggles Engineering to perform engineering and design work.

- No action taken.

b. Consideration of, and take any action on, application of Andrew Sullivan and Elizabeth Medina for highway access on Comerford Dam Road

The Board reviewed an application for a permanent driveway. Mr. Chase discussed his site inspection, indicating that he recommends approval without conditions; the proposed location uses an existing logging access. Ms. Medina appeared remotely for availability to answer any questions. Discussion ensued.

- The Board agreed to approve the permit without conditions. The Board signed the permit.

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

The Board reviewed an updated project tracking spreadsheet presented by Treasurer Benjamin Heisholt. This reflects that the Town has received \$1.956 million of anticipated \$1.978 million federal Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) project reimbursements. None of the anticipated \$330,000 state FEMA projects reimbursements or \$1.16 million Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) projects reimbursements have been received to date. This data is unchanged from the most recent Board meeting. Mr. Heisholt discussed ongoing communications with FEMA and FHWA representatives.

d. Other business

i. Gravel crushing and sand screening

Mr. Chase reported that the annual gravel crushing project is continuing to progress and will continue for a week or two longer. Annual sand screening will follow.

ii. West Barnet Road Construction

Mr. Chase reported that the West Barnet Road construction project will commence in a few weeks.

iii. Roadside mowing on Schoolhouse Road

Ms. Ford asked about roadside mowing, indicating that she had received a complaint about visibility on Schoolhouse Road. Mr. Chase reported that roadside mowing will continue once the Highway Department's other projects are completed.

iv. Laird Road culvert

Ms. Ford asked about the installation of a culvert on Laird Road; residents have noticed that the pond near the culvert has dried up after the culvert was installed. Mr. Chase indicated that the new culvert is larger than the old culvert, but this should not have affected the passage of water; the low water level is likely related to the relatively dry weather conditions.

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 Sue Persson regarding resignation from Beach Committee

The Board read an email indicating that Ms. Persson will resign from Beach Committee effective 1 September 2026. Discussion ensued.

- Mr. Gates moved to accept the resignation of Ms. Persson and thank her for her years of service to the Town through her volunteer work on the Beach Committee. Seconded by Mr. Adams and approved by voice vote.

6. Consideration of, and take any action on, correspondence from Northeastern Vermont Development Association (NVDA) regarding town representative to NVDA Board of Directors

The Board reviewed an email requesting that the Board appoint a representative to the NVDA Board of Directors in time for an important meeting on September 24, where the Board of Directors will vote to adopt the NVDA Regional Plan. Mr. Adams indicated that, during a recent Planning Commission/Zoning Board (PC/ZB) meeting, PC/ZB member Daniel Deatrack expressed interest in serving in this capacity. Discussion ensued.

- No action taken.

7. Consideration of, and take any action on, correspondence from New England Power Company (NEP) regarding petition to Vermont Public Utility Commission regarding proposal to upgrade portion of existing 34.5 kV line in Barnet

The Board reviewed emails and attachments providing notice and describing NEP's filings with the Vermont Public Utility Commission regarding its proposal to upgrade a portion of its 34.5 kV line within its existing right-of-way. Discussion ensued.

- No action taken.

8. Consideration of, and take any action on, certification of 2026 property tax rates

The Board reviewed the certification of 2026 property tax rates, as presented by Treasurer Benjamin Heisholt. Total rates, including all Town and Education rates, are 2.4583 for homestead and 2.3834 for non-homestead.

- Mr. Gates moved to approve the property tax rates as presented. Seconded by Mr. Adams and approved by voice vote. The Board signed the certification.

9. Other business presented by Selectboard

No other business was presented by the Selectboard.

Old Business

10. Consideration of, and take any action on, correspondence from Passumpsic Fire District #1 regarding resignation of Fire District officers

The Board reviewed correspondence from former Fire District officer Sheila Bean advising the Board that all officers of the Fire District have resigned, that as of August 14 the water system is unmanned, and that no bills for water usage or Fire District taxes are being issued. Ms. Bean requests that the Board assume responsibility for leadership of the Fire District. Ms. Ford indicated that she had requested advice from Town Attorney James Barlow. Discussion ensued.

- No action taken.

11. Consideration of, and take any action on, library electrical upgrades

Library Director Ms. Ford discussed her communications with electrician Jeremy Roberts. She indicated that he, and his electricity class at St. Johnsbury Academy, will not be available to perform work at the library soon; she also indicated that Mr. Roberts does not advise combining the two meter boxes at the building. Discussion ensued.

- The Board agreed to request that Green Mountain Power reinstate power to the second floor of the library building.

12. Consideration of, and take any action on, proposed change of speed limit on Harvey Mountain Road

Ms. Ford discussed her communications with Constable David Stevenson regarding the speed study he conducted in the area of the proposed speed limit change. He reported that he had visited the site various times over several weeks, totaling five (5) hours of speed data collection. He found that only a few motorists traveled above the speed limit, and those by only a small margin. Discussion ensued.

- The Board agreed to not proceed with the proposed speed limit change at this time.

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

The Board discussed strategies for selling the property, for which the Town has not received any offers. Mr. Gates proposed that the Board consider an auction. Discussion ensued.

- No action taken.

Check Warrants

14. Consideration of approval of outstanding check warrants

- The Board reviewed and approved all outstanding check warrants.

Executive Session(s) Anticipated

15. Consideration of, and take any action on, proposed tax appeal stipulation agreement with VTel Wireless (executive session anticipated pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(F))

- Mr. Gates moved that the Board make a specific finding, pursuant to 1 V.S.A. Section 313(a)(1)(F), that premature public knowledge of discussion concerning the proposed tax appeal stipulation agreement with VTel Wireless would clearly place the Town of Barnet at a substantial disadvantage. Seconded by Mr. Adams and approved by voice vote.
- Mr. Gates moved that the Board enter executive session pursuant to 1 V.S.A. Section 313(a)(1)(F) to discuss the proposed tax appeal stipulation agreement with VTel Wireless, 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 7:40 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 7:44 p.m.

- No action taken.

Adjournment

16. Adjournment

- Mr. Gates moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Mr. Adams and approved by voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

A true copy. Attest: _____ Town Clerk