

**Barre Town Budget Committee Meeting**  
**Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2017 - 2018**

March 16, 2017

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| 1. Call to order.....   | 6:30 p.m. |
| 2. Consider approving agenda                                      |           |
| 3. Consider approving March 7, 2017 meeting minutes.              |           |
| 4. Questions about material covered so far.                       |           |
| 5. Review Ambulance Fund  |           |
| 6. Recess   | 8:00 p.m. |
| 7. Reconvene  | 8:20 p.m. |
| 8. Review Ambulance Fund and some General Fund department budgets |           |
| 9. Recess this meeting  | 9:30 p.m. |

Minutes for March 16, 2017

The duly warned meeting of the Barre Town Budget Review Committee for the proposed 2017-2018 fiscal year budget was held March 16, 2017 at the Barre Town Municipal Building, Emergency Operation Center, Lower Websterville at 6:30 p.m.

The following members were in attendance: Tom White (arrived at 7:20 p.m.), Rolland Tessier, W. John "Jack" Mitchell, Rob LaClair, Bob Nelson, Norma Malone, Justin Bolduc, John Hameline and Jerry Parrot. Paul White was absent.

Also in attendance were: Town Manager Carl Rogers, Asst. Town Manager Elaine Wang, Town Clerk-Treasurer Donna J. Kelty, Jeff Blow, Paul Hennessey, Nancy Pope, Sara Costa, Robin Chevalier, Adrienne Scucces, Louisa Patterson, Bruce Talmadge, Maryanne Couture, Sandy Kirkland, Gary Dedonenick, and Times Argus reporter Eric Blaisdell.

**RECONVENE**

Vice Chair Mitchell called the meeting to order (reconvened) at 6:31 p.m.

**APPROVE AGENDA**

*On a motion by Bob Nelson, seconded by Norma Malone the agenda was approved and amended to add an item 4A - Not for profit discussion which will begin upon the arrival of the Chair, providing he is not too late. Paul White and Tom White were not present for the vote.*

**APPROVE MEETING MINUTES**

*On a motion by Bob Nelson, seconded by John Hameline, the meeting minutes for March 7, 2017 were approved as presented. Paul White and Tom White were not present for the vote.*

**QUESTIONS ON MATERIAL COVERED**

There were none.

**AMBULANCE FUND REVIEW CONTINUED**

Norma Malone asked to have the new CPR program (\$4,000 which includes wages and mannequins) for further discussion.

The EMS Director had family obligations and is unable to attend. The Manager continued his review with the Expense section, ambulance equipment costs noting charges were increased by 5.1%. Other notable items were the equipment certification costs (to include powerload cot system), consumable medical supplies (included as part of the base fee charged by the service), building maintenance/furniture (mattresses, carpet, window blinds), driver safety training,

## **BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING OF March 16, 2017 continued:**

auditing and dispatching (fund share of total), outside billing services, employee benefits (all insurances), and the new tax on ambulance services' patient billing revenue (new item).

### **NOT FOR PROFIT DISCUSSION**

Mitchell stated that since the Chair had not arrived yet the discussion would begin. Committee members voiced their opinions with regards to the Aldrich Library being on the ballot versus in the budget.

Malone stated she felt the policy contains nebulous language and should be reviewed by the Selectboard. A big concern is this Committee is picking winners (those in the budget as a line item) versus those that have to take their chances as a ballot article. LaClair noted most Libraries are owned by the municipality and are considered municipal services, thus the reasoning for having it as a line item along with several others.

Tessier and Hameline both agreed the issue of budget items versus ballot article needs more discussion. Nelson agreed and spoke to what he hears from residents - too many not-for-profit articles on the ballot. Parrot stated that splitting the Library budget request (part in budget, part as a separate article) is too confusing. Does the reason for splitting still apply? Bolduc feels confused as well.

Chair White arrived at 7:30 p.m. and Mitchell continued to run the meeting.

Rogers reminded the Committee the Town has no control over the number of not-for-profit articles. Should an entity submit a timely and complete petition, then legally they must be on the ballot. However, he would like to speak with the Town Attorney for more direction on "not-for-profits" being included in the Budget. He further noted that past practice has been to finish reviewing all the budgets and then discuss items such as this at the final meeting(s).

Library board members, residents, and guests were present. Director Sara Costa provided the Committee with copies of the Trustee By-laws and the Aldrich will. She also invited committee members to come and tour the Library facility.

Each resident/guest spoke to their support for the Library. The following statements are the summary of comments:

- Concur having the Library appropriation as 2 components (part in budget, part as a separate article) is confusing. Majority would prefer the entire appropriation as a line item in budget as they consider it a municipal service.
- The Library has always been a community center. However, with all the technological advances, their offerings have also had to evolve and grow. This service is a great place for families new to the Barre area as it provides opportunities for learning through means other than just reading and getting to know their community.

Resident Jeff Blow supports the library activities. However, with a \$189,000 request (slightly over 3¢ on the tax rate) he feels the 8,000 or so residents of the community should decide the fate of this expenditure as opposed to the 10 Budget Committee members. He encourages the Committee to have the appropriation request as a separate ballot article like all other not-for-profits.

After hearing comments from the public, consensus of the Committee members is they are struggling and conflicted with where the appropriation request should live. Most concur having two separate requests (one line item in budget and one separate article) is too confusing and may not be as transparent as it should.

A question arose regarding the Form 990 which states the Library employees are City employees. Ms. Costa noted the City of Barre is the Library's payroll service which is very economical. To use the City service and EIN they must be listed as City employees.

## **BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING OF March 16, 2017 continued:**

Many Committee members believe the Library needs to do a better job justifying their appropriation request to the public. The investment portfolio and deficit spending were noted.

The deadline for finishing review is fast approaching and it was agreed to hold a special meeting on March 20, 2017 due to the March 14<sup>th</sup> cancellation (snowstorm). There will be no decision made tonight with regards to the appropriation amount or if the request will be a separate article on the ballot. The plan is to finish the budget review on Monday and into Tuesday and to possibly address the question on Tuesday, May 21<sup>st</sup> or the final meeting.

### **RECESS and RECONVENE**

*On a motion by Nelson, seconded by Tessier, the Budget Committee recessed at 8:07 p.m. for a brief Selectboard meeting.*

*On a motion by Malone, seconded by Hameline, the Budget Committee reconvened at 8:47 p.m.*

### **GENERAL FUND REVIEW CONTINUED**

The Manager distributed a new Preliminary Summary Fund Sheet which details the departments, 16-17 Budget, the proposed 17-18 budget, and differences. Rogers stated this sheet does not include the Police, Fire, Recreation, or Employee Benefits sections. Of those departments already reviewed the General Fund proposed 17-18 expenditures are increasing \$67,760 thus far.

Review began with Data Processing (computer software maintenance and upgrades) and continued with the Assessing Department (assessor contract wages), Planning & Zoning (postage increase - used reserve last fiscal year and the GIS online one-time fee), Municipal Building (sidewalk repair and EOC chairs), Solid Waste (Lawn waste site, bulk trash collections, and equipment charges, and lawn mowing), the Health Officer (stipend), Debt Service (Incubator building at the Wilson Industrial Park), and the interfund transfers (equipment fund and the separate appropriation article put before the voters for the Cemetery fund).

Animal Control Department (011-452). Our current Animal Control Officer (ACO) is now employed as a Police Officer for Barre Town and we may need to seek a replacement. It was mentioned it may be time to revisit providing a town vehicle for use by this employee. The committee inquired if perhaps our animal shelter service (Random Rescue) could be contracted to do the ACO work. Rogers will investigate.

Culture-Recreation-Dev-Transportation (011-463) is where the not-for-profit items like the Aldrich Library, GMTA and Economic Development agencies appropriations live.

The final sections being reviewed during this meeting were Insurances (Commercial Blanket bond, general liability, employee benefits liability, etc.), and Other Items (property purchases always \$1, VLCT per capita rate, county taxes, and Williamstown land owned (wells).

### **NEXT MEETING**

The Budget Committee meeting will reconvene on Monday, March 20, 2017, 6:30 p.m. at the Emergency Operation Center, Municipal Building in Lower Websterville. Discussion will be the Police, Fire, Recreation and Benefits departments. The regular budget meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 21, 2017, 6:30 p.m.

### **RECESS**

*On a motion by Mitchell, seconded by Tom White, the Budget Committee recessed at 10:20 p.m.*

The minutes as taken by:

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*Donna J. Kelty, Town Clerk-Treasurer*