

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

March 21, 2017

1. Call to order.....6:30 p.m.
2. Consider approving agenda
3. Consider approving March 16 and March 20 (if available) meeting minutes.
4. Work on final review of fund budgets
5. Recess this meeting

Minutes for March 21, 2017

The duly warned meeting of the Barre Town Budget Review Committee for the proposed 2017-2018 fiscal year budget was held March 21, 2017 at the Barre Town Municipal Building, Emergency Operation Center, Lower Websterville at 6:36 p.m.

The following members were in attendance: Tom White, Rolland Tessier, W. John "Jack" Mitchell, Rob LaClair, Bob Nelson, Norma Malone, John Hameline, Justin Bolduc, 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, DPW Superintendent Richard Tetreault, Shop Foreman Michael Martel, EMS Director Chris Lamonda, Nancy Pope (and guest), Paul McGinley, and Jeff Blow.

RECONVENE

Chair White called the meeting to order (reconvened) at 6:36 p.m.

APPROVE AGENDA

On a motion by Malone, seconded by Tessier, the Budget Committee voted to approve the agenda. Paul White, was not present for the vote.

APPROVE MEETING MINUTES

On a motion by Nelson, seconded by Tessier, the Budget Committee voted to approve the meeting minutes of March 16 and 20, 2017 with the changes made prior to the start of the meeting. Paul White was not present for the vote.

REVIEW OF BOARD ITEMS

EMS Director Chris Lamonda was present for the review of his proposed CPR Program. He explained there is no regional training facility for CPR. Anything that happens is usually by happenstance. The CVMC and Red Cross do provide some training but not on a regular schedule. As EMS Director, he receives telephone calls frequently regarding CPR certification. His goal is to provide some type of program regularly for all who need certification/re-certification. This would be a great community service not only to our contracted Towns but to individuals and businesses. It is anticipated the program may be off to a slow start but should pick up through advertising and word of mouth.

The Committee felt there should be some type of fee to at least break even for the cost of this program. After much discussion, it was agreed that \$3,500 should be added to the ambulance revenue for class fees. Cost per person would be around \$25.00 per person.

Road salt is always a hot topic. With weather being so unpredictable it is hard to find that perfect usage amount. Last fiscal year, due to the quantity of salt remaining in the shed the budget for the current year was decreased. However, with recent storms we have exceeded current year budget. The Manager has proposed a road salt budget for 17-18 using an

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING OF March 21, 2017 continued:

averaged amount (around 10 years) of 2400 tons. Discussion focused on global warming, the tonnage remaining in the salt shed, and the strong possibility of another spring storm.

Consensus is NOT to reduce the proposed salt budget for FY 17-18.

Mitchell stated he would like to remove the wood chipper from the board given the proposed highway fund increase. The discussion focused on need, maintenance, cost for a new chipper would be around \$38,000, and nixing the idea of purchasing a used one.

Malone recommended the removal of DPW staffing from the board as this is a Selectboard issue. Everyone agreed.

Manager Rogers distributed a list of Highway Fund items which could possibly be reduced. The list included road sweeping, hiring outside trucks for hauling, gravel crushing, crack sealing, line painting, dust control, advertising, and the Quarry Hill guard rail project.

Each item was discussed. The Highway Fund is always up and down due to varying road projects. If you average the increases for the past five years it is around 2% per year. Barre Town voters are very supportive this budget and have supported the Highway improvement/projects over the years. Consensus is to NOT make any cuts to this fund.

The Manager did note that 1¢ on the tax rate is equivalent to just over \$63,000.

Malone stated she would like to present an item for discussion with regards to the Aldrich Library issue. She has reviewed the will and bylaws and believes the intent is to serve the Town and City. It would be very irresponsible not to fund the Library and does not there should be a separate article for a portion of library funding. The average voter turnout in a Barre Town annual election is 16% - not the majority of those on the checklist.

She would like to propose that the City, Town, and Library Trustees meet to draft an agreement which could help eliminate the annual issues surrounding funding. The agreement should address, at minimum, three points: 1) Accountability - always have a balanced budget, provide annual financial statements, and have an independent audit at least once every three years; 2) Ownership - concern the Library is owned by a corporation. Provide language that in the event the Library dissolves the municipalities will receive a portion of the proceeds; and 3) Fiscal Support - create a formula for municipal appropriations which will allow adjustments to the per capita rate (this would provide a predictable form of revenue).

The Committee agreed this would be a good place to start to resolve future budgeting concerns and protect taxpayers from large appropriation requests. However, due to time constraints, the Town should for this year, continue with the hybrid vote (majority of funding as a line item in the budget and the remaining \$55,000 on a separate article on the ballot).

Ms. Pope stated she has no doubt this group supports the Library. The appropriation in the current fiscal year budget (even though it was approved in 2 parts; a portion as a line item and a portion as a separate article) is the same amount requested for next fiscal year. If the entire appropriation were placed in the proposed budget as a line item, there would be no impact to the *total* tax rate. You would be deducting the \$55,000 from the local agreement rate and moving it to the General Fund - a wash. The biggest fear is what happens to operations should the separate article fail (\$55,000 or 10% of their budget). The separation of funding creates uncertainty for the Library and voter confusion until the vote. She further noted the Library is open to work with all parties to resolve future funding issues.

Rogers stated he received information from the Town Attorney regarding not-for-profits on the ballot versus in the budget. Statute basically states that social service programs must be a separate article while it is silent on items such as Economic Development and the Library. The silent items would be at Board discretion.

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING OF March 21, 2017 continued:

NEXT MEETING

The Budget Committee meeting will reconvene on Tuesday, March 28, 2017, 6:30 p.m. at the Emergency Operation Center, Municipal Building in Lower Websterville to approve the various budgets.

RECESS

On a motion by Malone, seconded by Tessier, the Budget Committee recessed at 8:12 p.m.

The minutes as taken by:

Donna J. Kelty, Town Clerk-Treasurer

DRAFT