

**MINUTES
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
TOWN OF BARNET, VERMONT
MARCH 5, 2013**

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. at the Barnet Elementary School gymnasium by Moderator Dennis McLam. The Barnet Elementary School band played the National Anthem. Mr. McLam led the salute to the flag, announced that lunch would be served by the school cafeteria at noon, and explained the rules of order for the meeting.

ARTICLE 1. To elect a Moderator.

- Moderator stated that one-year term of Dennis McLam is expiring.
- Dennis McLam nominated by Mona Marceau.
- Theodore Faris moved that nominations cease. Seconded.
- Moderator instructed Town Clerk to cast one ballot for Dennis McLam.

ARTICLE 2. To elect all other Town Officers as required by law and additional Town Officers as approved by the voters.

Selectman

- Moderator stated that the three-year term of Jeremy Roberts is expiring.
- Jeremy Roberts nominated by Theodore Faris.
- Hearing no further nominations, Moderator announced that nominations would cease.
- Moderator instructed Town Clerk to cast one ballot for Jeremy Roberts.

Lister

- Moderator stated that the three-year term of John Cook is expiring.
- John Cook nominated by Robert Roos.
- Mona Marceau moved that nominations cease. Seconded by Rosemary Kinerson.
- Moderator instructed Town Clerk to cast one ballot for John Cook.

Auditor

- Moderator stated that the three-year term of Jeffrey Riley is expiring.
- Jeffrey Riley nominated by Robert Roos.
- Mona Marceau moved that nominations cease. Seconded by Rosemary Kinerson.
- Moderator instructed Town Clerk to cast one ballot for Jeffrey Riley.

Collector of Delinquent Tax

- Moderator stated that one-year term of Lisa Bowden is expiring.
- Lisa Bowden nominated by Mark Gilleland.
- Mona Marceau moved that nominations cease. Seconded by Rosemary Kinerson.

- Moderator instructed Town Clerk to cast one ballot for Lisa Bowden.

First Constable

- Moderator stated that two-year term of Timothy Gibbs is expiring.
- Michael Bergeron nominated by Jeremy Roberts.
- David Stevenson nominated by Mona Marceau.
- Mona Marceau moved that nominations cease. Seconded by Rosemary Kinerson.
- Mona Marceau spoke, stating that she understands that Mr. Bergeron lives in Vermont only during the summer, and that his out-of-state residency may adversely affect his ability to serve as First Constable.
- Theodore Faris spoke: There are new laws that require elected constables to have significant law enforcement training; this would make Mr. Bergeron a good candidate.
- Michael Bergeron was elected by a show of hands vote (Michael Bergeron: 42 votes, David Stevenson: 32 votes)
- Mona Marceau asked what would result if Mr. Bergeron, who was not present for this meeting, did not wish to hold this office.
- Moderator Dennis McLam spoke, indicating that the Selectboard would appoint a replacement for Mr. Bergeron if he was to resign.
- Theodore Faris spoke, indicating that there is no difference between First and Second Constable in terms of authority. Each is independent of the other and of the Selectboard; the titles “First” and “Second” are only naming conventions.

Second Constable

- Moderator stated that two-year term of David Stevenson is expiring.
- David Stevenson nominated by Rosemary Kinerson.
- Mona Marceau moved that nominations cease. Seconded by David Warden.
- Moderator instructed Town Clerk to cast one ballot for David Stevenson.

Grand Juror

- Moderator stated that one-year term of Michael Bergeron is expiring.
- Michael Bergeron nominated by Theodore Faris.
- Mona Marceau moved that nominations cease. Seconded by Rosemary Kinerson.
- Moderator instructed Town Clerk to cast one ballot for Michael Bergeron.

Town Agent

- Moderator stated that one-year term of Jay Abramson is expiring.
- Jay Abramson nominated by Mona Marceau.
- Hearing no further nominations, Moderator announced that nominations would cease.
- Moderator instructed Town Clerk to cast one ballot for Jay Abramson.

Trustee of Public Funds

- Moderator stated that three-year term of William Graves is expiring.
- William Graves nominated by David Warden.
- Mona Marceau moved that nominations cease. Seconded by Rosemary Kinerson.
- Moderator instructed Town Clerk to cast one ballot for William Graves.

Library Trustee

- Moderator stated that five-year term of Cathy McLam is expiring. Moderator indicated that Ms. McLam does not seek re-election.
- Julie Roos nominated by Sarah Walls.
- Jane Casavant nominated by Sherry Tolle.
- Hearing no further nominations, Moderator announced that nominations would cease.
- Julie Roos was elected by a show of hands vote (Julie Roos: 84 votes, Jane Casavant: 8 votes)

ARTICLE 3. To consider and act upon the report of the Town Auditors.

- Mona Marceau moved to accept the report of the Town Auditors as it appears on page thirty-six of the Town Report. Seconded by Rosemary Kinerson.
- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 4. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of Two Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$250.00) to the American Red Cross, Northern Vermont Chapter?

- Rosemary Kinerson moved the article as warned. Seconded by Mona Marceau.
- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 5. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) to Area Agency on Aging for Northeastern Vermont?

- Mona Marceau moved the article as warned. Seconded by James Verrill.
- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 6. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) to the Barnet Historical Society to be used for maintaining the Goodwillie House?

- David Warden moved the article as warned. Seconded by Mona Marceau.
- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 7. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of Two Thousand Three Hundred Dollars (\$2,300.00) to Caledonia Home Health Care?

- Mona Marceau moved the article as warned. Seconded by Rosemary Kinerson.
- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 8. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of Seventeen Thousand Fifty Dollars (\$17,050.00) to CALEX Ambulance Service?

- Mona Marceau moved the article as warned. Seconded by Ronald Morse.
- Joyce Evans asked why CALEX is requesting so much more than in 2012 (\$7,160).
 - Celina Wright, CALEX President, responded: CALEX should have requested increased funding in 2012; the extremity of the increase in 2013 is in part because they did not request enough in 2012. Other factors include: a) an increase in the number of “non-transport” (when CALEX responds to a call but does not transport the patient); b) inflationary cost increases; and c) disadvantageous changes in CALEX’s “payer mix” (the percentages of payments received from private versus government insurances). The cost to Barnet taxpayers, even with the increase, is approximately ten dollars per capita; this is a good deal, and one of the lowest per capita costs in the state.
- Mona Marceau spoke, expressing a concern that, even if Barnet passes this appropriation their service may be adversely affected if other larger towns, such as St. Johnsbury, do not pass their appropriations.
- Mary Jean Thielen spoke in support of CALEX, praising their subscriber program as a method for defraying taxpayer costs.
- Celina Wright spoke, indicating that CALEX has increased rates that it charges insurance companies, also in an effort to defray taxpayer expense.
- Kristen Nutter spoke in support of CALEX, indicating that she has worked at CALEX in the past, and observed that the staff obtains extensive and ongoing training.
- Mark Gilleland asked how CALEX’s expansion to serve Littleton, New Hampshire will be funded.
 - Celina Wright indicated that the Littleton operation will be self-funding – not using Vermont tax appropriations – through a contract with the municipality costing sixteen dollars per capita.
- Sarah Cook moved to fund CALEX’s increased appropriation request by reducing the appropriation to Caledonia County by \$10,000.
 - Theodore Faris spoke, indicating that the Town does not have the authority to adjust the County appropriation; it must pay the full amount billed as a tax.
 - Sarah Cook withdrew her motion.
- Theodore Faris spoke, stating that the Selectboard is very aware of the need for an ambulance service. The Board has not, however, received an annual report from CALEX, which would have been helpful in assessing their request.
 - Celina Wright indicated that the 2012 financial statements have not been audited yet, but she will forward the 2011 financial statements to the Selectboard.
- Mona Marceau spoke, stating that CALEX, based on the oaths of their employees, must provide the same level of ambulance service to the public whether their increased appropriation request is granted or not.
 - John Cook responded: There is a limit to the debt that CALEX can absorb in fulfilling their employees’ oaths; they will eventually go bankrupt, and the Town may be left without a quality ambulance service.
- William Barbour asked if there has been a change in service since CALEX expanded its service to include Littleton.

- Celina Wright responded: The St. Johnsbury operation was not affected by the move to Littleton: St. Johnsbury and Littleton are completely separate operations.
- Mona Marceau asked if any CALEX trucks were moved to the Littleton operation.
 - Celina Wright responded: A truck was moved to the Littleton operation, but it was replaced in St. Johnsbury with a new truck.
- Shirley Warden moved for a division of the assembly by paper ballot. Seven other voters seconded this motion. Paper ballots were distributed.
- While paper ballots were being tabulated by the Board of Civil Authority, State Representative Leigh Larocque spoke regarding legislation under consideration in the Vermont Legislature. Among these are a Senate bill that would make private schools (including St. Johnsbury Academy and Lyndon Institute, where many Barnet School graduates attend) subject to certain State requirements, and an increase in the gasoline tax, or a decrease in State aid to Towns for Class 2 roads, as a means to fund the transportation budget.
- David Warden asked Mr. Larocque why the variables in the formula for state education funding have been changed to the disadvantage of towns such as Barnet.
 - Mr. Larocque responded: Often the education fund has been depleted to fund other programs, and this has created problems.
- John Cook asked Mr. Larocque about a bill currently under consideration that would change the state education funding formula.
 - Mr. Larocque responded: This bill will not be acted on without amendment.
- The result of paper ballot vote was announced by the Moderator: 153 “Yes” votes, 26 “No” votes. The motion was passed.

ARTICLE 9. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) to Catamount Arts?

- Rosemary Kinerson moved the article as warned. Seconded by James Verrill.
- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 10. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of One Thousand Seven Hundred Dollars (\$1,700.00) to Fairbanks Museum and Planetarium?

- Rosemary Kinerson moved the article as warned. Seconded by Robert Roos.
- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 11. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000) to the Lake Harvey Association to be used for a boat monitoring/wash program dedicated to the prevention of milfoil and other invasive species at Harvey’s Lake?

- Mona Marceau moved the article as warned. Seconded by Rosemary Kinerson.
- David Kristoff asked if this appropriation is working.
 - David Curtin, Vice President of the Lake Harvey Association responded: The lake has not yet been infected with milfoil or other invasive species; as this is the stated goal of this appropriation, it is working.
- David Kristoff asked if there are user fees for the program.
 - David Curtin responded: It is against State law to charge a fee for this service. Furthermore, charging a fee would encourage users to put potentially

contaminated vessels in the lake at other locations.

- David Warden stated that he has heard rumors of boats entering the lake at other locations, and asked if this can be stopped.
 - David Curtin responded: It is difficult to enforce a policy of all boats entering the lake at the southern boat access. The Association puts up signs around the lake and works to educate its members regarding the dangers of milfoil.
- Mona Marceau spoke: Hopefully the lakefront property owners are aware of this issue and do not allow others to put potentially contaminated boats into the lake at their properties. More education of people outside of the Association is needed.
 - David Curtin responded: This is a good suggestion, and the Association is working, through its upgraded website, signs, etc. to spread information about the threat of invasive species.
- Joyce Evans asked if the appropriation covers all of the expense for the program.
 - David Curtin responded: It does not cover all of the expense; the Association pays for any expenses above \$10,000.
- David Warden asked if boats are allowed to enter the lake at the public beach.
 - Theodore Faris responded: The Selectboard is not aware boats being allowed this access. The boat wash program at the southern public boat access is a joint project involving the Town, the Lake Harvey Association, and the State Fish and Wildlife Department.
- Joyce Evans asked where the water from the boat wash goes.
 - Theodore Faris responded: A pit containing crushed gravel was constructed when the boat wash was initiated. Approximately two to five gallons are used for each wash; most of it evaporates quickly.
- Michael Kennedy asked if there is signage along the South Peacham Brook indicating that boats are not permitted to enter the lake via this channel.
 - Theodore Faris responded, indicating that beavers make this channel impassable by boat, so no signage is necessary.
- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 12. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of One Thousand Seven Hundred Seventy-Five Dollars (\$1,775.00) to Northeast Kingdom Human Services, Inc.?

- Rosemary Kinerson moved the article as warned. Seconded by Mary Jean Thielen.
- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 13. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of Three Hundred Dollars (\$300.00) to Northeast Kingdom Learning Services, Inc.?

- Robert Roos moved the article as warned. Seconded by Mona Marceau.
- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 14. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) to Northeast Kingdom Youth Services?

- Mary Mallon moved the article as warned. Seconded by Richard Mallon.
- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 15. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of One Thousand One Hundred Dollars (\$1,100.00) to Rural Community Transportation?

- Mona Marceau moved the article as warned. Seconded by Rosemary Kinerson.
- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 16. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of Four Hundred Dollars (\$400.00) to Umbrella Inc.?

- Mona Marceau moved the article as warned. Seconded by Rosemary Kinerson.
- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 17. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of Two Hundred Eighty Dollars (\$280.00) to the Vermont Center for Independent Living?

- Rosemary Kinerson moved the article as warned. Seconded by Mona Marceau.
- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 18. Shall the Town of Barnet appropriate the sum of Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$2,500.00) to the West Barnet Senior Meal Site?

- James Verrill moved the article as warned. Seconded by Rosemary Kinerson.
- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 19. To see what arrangements the Town and Town School District will vote for the collection of its taxes and by what lawful official for the ensuing year.

- Lisa Bowden moved that taxes become due and payable in hand to the Town Treasurer during business hours on or before October 19, 2013, with said taxes to be actually received by said Treasurer on or before the due date without regard to postmark; and thereafter said taxes shall be payable to the Collector of Delinquent Tax with interest at the rate of 1% per month for the first three months, and thereafter at the rate of 1 ½ % per month, plus the collector's fee as provided by law. Seconded by Rosemary Kinerson.
- Rosemary Spinelli suggested tax bills announce that the due date of taxes is a Saturday and the hours that the Town Clerk's Office is open on this Saturday.
 - Treasurer Benjamin Heisholt indicated that he will place such a notice on the tax bills in the future.
- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 20. To see what sum of money the Town will vote to raise to defray the expenses and liabilities of the Town for the current year.

- Jeremy Roberts moved to raise the sum of \$604,636 for the Selectmen's budget and \$529,700 for the Highway budget, for a total of \$1,134,336. Seconded by Mary Mallon.
- Theodore Faris spoke: The Selectboard reduced the workforce of the Highway Department from six to five employees in 2012; the budget figures reflect that change. The Board requests communication from taxpayers indicating if they are pleased with the level of service provided after this change.
- Mark Bowen spoke, indicating that although he appreciates the work done on

Comerford Dam Road in 2012, more work is required.

- Theodore Faris responded: The Selectboard does have plans to address this concern in 2013; this is reflected in the Road Foreman's Report.
- Mary Jean Thielen spoke in support of the Town budget, complimenting the Selectboard for their fiscal responsibility and for considering the impact of their decisions on retired residents.
- Theodore Faris spoke: The Town has been "in business" for 250 years; it is with pride at such a time that the Selectboard can publish in the Town Report that the Town has no long or short-term debt other than 30-day payables. The Selectboard wishes that Montpelier and Washington, D.C. would handle their finances in a like manner.
- Gail Warnaar asked if the fifteen cent increase in the estimated tax rate (as reflected on page 73 of the Town Report) includes an increase in the budget of the Town.
 - John Cook responded: This increase is a result of the School's budget, not the Town's.
- Robert Roos spoke: It appears that the majority of the increase in the Town budget results from increases in the appropriation requests of CALEX Ambulance Service and Caledonia County. What does the County do for the Town?
 - Theodore Faris responded: The county appropriation is a tax billed to the Town: we pay our share and have no control over the dollar amount. Roy Vance, the Superior Court judge, does a good job crafting the budget. The increases this year are due, according to Judge Vance, to employment issues, losses in the past few years, and several bookkeeping errors. The budget increases to compensate for these factors will be spread over a two-year period starting with this year's appropriation. The appropriation pays for the courthouse and the Sheriff's Department.
- Michael Kennedy asked if the Town plans to apply any treatment to the foam on the Town Garage.
 - Jeremy Roberts responded: The Municipal Buildings Fund will be used to pay for treatment this summer – probably using stucco.
- David Warden asked if the Selectboard has plans to renovate the Town Hall.
 - Jeremy Roberts responded: We dedicated the Town Hall in 2009 with the intention of renovating the building to a usable state. First steps toward this, including possible foundation work and window replacement, are planned for 2013. The long-term goal is, with the help of a committee for the project, to move the Town Clerk's Office to the Town Hall and sell the Town Clerk's Office.
- Theodore Faris spoke regarding the work completed in 2012 on a salt shed at the Town Garage location.
- Jeremy Roberts spoke regarding the sale of town-owned properties in the past few years. The Selectboard's goal has been to return these properties to the tax rolls; the same goal is in mind for the Town Clerk's Office.
- Gail Warnaar suggested that the voters should cut \$10,000 from the Municipal Buildings Fund appropriation to lessen the impact of the increase in the School District budget.
 - Some brief discussion regarding this suggestion was had, but no motion to this effect was made.

- Motion was passed by voice vote.

ARTICLE 21. To transact any other business that may legally come before the meeting.

- Theodore Faris presented a pot of soldier beans as a gift from the Selectboard to Jeremy Roberts in appreciation for his service.
- Dylan Ford, Vice President of the Barnet Historical Society and part of the committee scheduling events for Barnet’s 250th anniversary spoke about events planned.
- Barbara Warden also spoke regarding 250th anniversary celebrations, including a box social, dance, and parade.
- Mona Marceau spoke, encouraging residents to “like” the Facebook page of Barnet’s 250th anniversary to stay informed about events.
- Robert Farlice-Rubio, employee of Fairbanks Museum, spoke regarding museum brochures and coupons available at the meeting.
- Grace Gershuny and Shirley Warden spoke regarding Green-Up Day, scheduled for Saturday, May 4.
- Amy Miller, of the Milarepa Center, spoke regarding an open house to be held, as a part of the 250th anniversary celebrations, at the Milarepa Center.
- Theodore Faris moved to adjourn. Seconded by Robert Roos.
 - Passed by voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

Dennis McLam, Moderator

Theodore Faris, Selectman

Attest: Benjamin Heisholt, Town Clerk