

VILLAGE OF BARTON ANNUAL MEETING
TUESDAY, MARCH 14, 2023

In accordance with the foregoing notice, the legal voters of the Village of Barton, Vermont convened at the time and location specified in the warning. Board Chair Nathan Sicard called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Chair Nathan Sicard asked if Article 13 could be discussed first so Patty Richards, Independent Consultant, could speak about the future of the electric company.

Leonidas Zenonos made a motion to have Article 13 moved to the beginning of the meeting. This was seconded by David Snedeker. Motion passed.

Article 13. A Public Information Session regarding the future of the electric company.

Chair Nathan Sicard asked if Patty Richards, a non-resident, be allowed to speak. Leonidas Zenonos motioned to allow Patty to speak, seconded by Paul Sicard. Motion carried.

Patty advised she was retained in June of 2022 as an Independent Electric Consultant and said she was going to discuss the handout that was provided at the beginning of the meeting. She stated she was hired to help the Trustees navigate the electric company after the vote last year failed.

She stated that there was a bid by Vermont Electric Coop (VEC), shortly after the vote, VEC provided their notice to end the contract with Barton Village. The only company to put in a bid was Vermont Public Power Supply Authority (VPPSA).

Stephen Uurtamo asked how long the contract with VPPSA was for and was advised that there has to be a 1 year notice for either party to end the contract.

There has been a request for an 18.27% increase to Barton Electric rates. There was a \$528,262.00 shortfall in the budget which resulted in rate increase. The rate increase has a process to be approved by the Department of Public Service and the Public Utility Commission. This should happen in the next day or so.

George Komendat asked if this amount covers the deficiencies what happens the following year? Patty advised this should cover the expenses and should not result in a pot of money, it should cover what is necessary for the expenses.

Patty advised the factors that have increased the rates are:

1. VPPSA contract was \$356,150.00, which was an increase of the previous contract, although VPPSA does offer more services than Vermont Electric Coop did (VEC).

There was \$282,383.00 increase as there was a loss of approximately \$155,000.00 in FY22.

Donna Cincotta asked if part of the increase was for Patty's salary and another contractor and she was advised yes, a follow up question was how long they were hired for and she was advised until the Trustees end the contract.

Ellis Merchant asked what would happen if the village actually had lineman and paid their salaries and insurance? What would the increase be. Nathan Sicard advised that he did do some figuring and he advised there would have been a potential for a 14% increase.

Patty stated she doesn't believe the increase would have been that large.

Stephen Uurtamo asked what happened to the staff and Donna Cincotta advised they all resigned.

Patty advised the Trustees made some great decisions with purchasing power and this resulted in a decrease of 150,000.00.

Donna Cincotta stated that the Barton Village Trustees did not want VPPSA to run the electric company.

Patty presented more facts from the handout and how figures were arrived. She advised that with this new proposal of 18.27% the following would happen:

If 600 kwh's a month was used with the current rate it would cost \$116.53
With the new rates the cost would be \$137.81.

Regina (Gina) Lyon asked if the village still had their equipment. Nathan Sicard advised that Patty worked to sell the equipment to help with the contract increases.

Barton Village paid VEC \$5,000.00 a week and with VPPSA they pay \$15,000.00 a week.

Ellis Merchant stated if the equipment was leased it was better to get rid of it as if it sits around not being used it wouldn't be useful.

Patty stated the Village bought out the lease for \$67,000.00 and then sold the truck to Washington Electric for \$155,000.00.

Stephen Uurtamo asked about the Hydro plant and what the likelihood that it would fail. Nathan Sicard advised that Patty hasn't worked with this but they have a part-time manager of the plant and last year an engineering firm did an inspection of the pen stock.

Article 13 (Ctd.):

There was more discussion about any repairs and how they would be paid for.

Patty did advise that back to the electric the rate increase could be a 2 – 4-month process, but the rates will be in effect beginning 4/1/2023. The new increase would be listed as a temporary surcharge on the bills.

Donna Cincotta asked what happens if the rate is not approved and she was advised it would be refunded. Nathan Sicard advised this happened in 2016.

This ended the discussion of the electric company update.

Article 1. Elect a Moderator for one year.

There was no nominations and Nathan Sicard advised no moderator would be elected and the next person in succession to run the meeting is the Chairman of the Trustees, which is Nathan Sicard.

Article 2. Elect a Clerk for one year.

Shelia Martin was nominated for the office of Clerk. A motion was made by Leonidas Zenonos and duly seconded by Gina Lyon. The motion carried and Shelia Martin was duly elected Clerk for the ensuing year.

Article 3: Elect a Trustee for three years and a Trustee for one year.

Chairman Sicard advised the first office would be for the three-year term.

Nathan Sicard advised this office is currently held by Nathan Sicard.

Stephen Uurtamo nominated Gina Lyon. Justin Barton-Caplin nominated Nathan Sicard. A motion to have nominations cease was made by Leonidas Zenonos and seconded by Stephen Uurtamo.

Gina Lyon asked that a paper ballot vote be conducted, duly seconded by Leonidas Zenonos.

Article 3 (Ctd.):

Nathan Sicard and Gina Lyon both spoke about why they were interested in the position and what they have to bring to the Village.

The votes were tallied with the following results:

Nathan Sicard – 24 votes

Gina Lyon -- 36 votes

Gina Lyon was elected to Trustee for a 3-year term.

Nathan Sicard stepped down from moderating the meeting and it was taken over by Jacqueline Laurion.

Jacqueline Laurion advised the next part of the article was to elect a Trustee for a 2-year term. Jacqueline Laurion advised she was currently in that position.

Gina Lyon nominated Marilyn Prue. Justin Barton-Caplin nominated Nathan Sicard.

A motion to have nominations cease was made by Leonidas Zenonos and seconded by Gina Lyon.

Leonidas Zenonos asked that a paper ballot vote be conducted, duly seconded by Gina Lyon.

The votes were tallied with the following results:

Nathan Sicard – 25 votes

Marilyn Prue -- 35 votes

Marilyn Prue was elected to Trustee for a 2-year term

Article 4: Elect the following officers for one year.
Treasurer, Collector of Delinquent Taxes

Donna Cincotta asked that the positions be voted on separately.

Shelia Martin was nominated for the office of Treasurer. A motion was made by Roger Bernier and duly seconded by Leonidas Zenonos. The motion carried and Shelia Martin was duly elected Treasurer.

The second part of the article was to elect a Collector of Delinquent Tax Collector.

Lawrence Cincotta nominated Donna Cincotta. Nathan Sicard nominated Shelia Martin.

George Komendat asked if Donna was at the meeting and what her qualifications were. She advised she was a paralegal and has done some work with taxes.

Shelia Martin advised that she has been doing the job for 7 years and has a great success rate.

Donna Cincotta asked if the position had to be a village residence and Leonidas Zenonos asked if she had read the charter for the village and she stated only the state statute.

Nathan Sicard stated when the previous delinquent tax collector and treasurer stepped down they checked with the Village Attorney and was advised as long as the person was a resident within the town there was no issue. Nathan further stated Shelia has done a great job and has been very successful with collections.

Leonidas Zenonos asked for a paper ballot, seconded by Justin Barton-Caplin.

The votes were tallied with the following results:

Donna Cincotta – 4 votes
Shelia Martin – 41 votes

Shelia Martin was elected to Collector of Delinquent Taxes for a 1-year term

Article 5: Shall the Village compensate the following elected officials for 2023. These funds will be raised through operating budgets from the Village departments as allowed:

Trustee - \$1500 Clerk - \$210, Treasurer – 1% of taxes collected, Delinquent Tax Collector – 8% of Taxes Collected.

Stephen Uurtamo motioned to accept the article as proposed, Leonidas Zenonos seconded. There was no discussion and the motion passed.

Article 6: Shall the Village raise \$65,000 through taxes upon the grand list for the funds requested in the 2023 Annual Village Budget and the ensuing year and direct the Trustees to assess a tax on the grand list sufficient to meet the same. (See Village Department Budget for assessment request by the Trustees)

Stephen Uurtamo motioned to accept the article as proposed, Josh Noyes seconded. There was no discussion, the motion passed.

Article 7: Shall the Village raise \$338,100 through taxes upon the grand list for the funds requested in the 2023 Annual Highway Budget and the ensuing year and direct the Trustees to assess a tax on the grand list sufficient to meet the same. (See Highway Department Budget for assessment request by the Trustees)

Stephen Uurtamo motioned to accept the article as proposed, Gina Lyon seconded. There was no discussion, the motion passed.

Article 8: Shall the Village raise \$68,804 through taxes and user fees for water department capital debt retirement and water capital reserve funds, such funds will be used for major repairs, replacement, and upgrades to the structural components of the Village water system. (See Water Department Budget for assessment request by the Trustees)

Stephen Uurtamo motioned to accept the article as proposed, Leonidas Zenonos seconded. There was no discussion, the motion passed.

Article 9: Shall the Village raise \$57,200 through taxes and user fees for wastewater department capital debt retirement and wastewater capital reserve funds, such funds will be used for major replacements and upgrades to the structural components of the Village Wastewater System. (See Wastewater Department Budget for assessment request by the Trustees)

Leonidas Zenonos motioned to accept the article as proposed and Roger Bernier seconded. There was no discussion, the motion passed.

Article 10: Shall the Village appropriate the sum of \$5,000 in funds to be used as matching funds for grant applications that demonstrate direct benefit to the Village of Barton community and/or its residents with requirements for said appropriation to be a report of income and expense and instruct the Trustees to assess a tax sufficient to meet the same.

Stephen Uurtamo motioned to accept the article as proposed and Josh Noyes seconded. There was no discussion, the motion passed.

Article 11: Shall the Village collect its taxes due and payable within 60 days without discount. Interest to accrue on delinquent taxes at the maximum rate allowed by law and an 8% penalty assessed on all delinquent taxes and postmarks are not acceptable as payment dates.

Leonidas Zenonos motioned to accept the article as proposed and Roger Bernier seconded.

George Komendat asked for clarification and Shelia Martin explained how taxes were collected. There was no further discussion, the motion passed.

Article 12: Shall the Village authorize the Board of Trustees to spend an amount not to exceed 3 1/12th of the 2023 annual budget article adopted at the 2022 annual meeting during the period from January 1, 2024 until the annual village meeting held in March 2024.

Leonidas Zenonos motioned to accept the article as proposed, Stephen Uurtamo seconded. There was no discussion, the motion carried.

Article 13. Was moved to the beginning of the meeting.

Article 14: To act upon any other business that may legally come before said meeting.

Toni Eubanks spoke and stated she wanted to thank everyone who has served in the village, Nathan Sicard and Jacqueline Laurion.

Justin Barton-Caplin stated he has listened to the voters tonight and feel that he has a different vision for the village than what the voters want and tendered his resignation effective immediately.

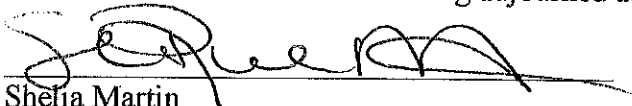
Jacqueline Laurion also wanted to thank Justin Barton-Caplin and Nate for all she learned from them and wanted everyone to know they have the best intentions for the village.

Nathan Sicard stated he wanted to recognize Cathy Swain who was a trustee that resigned due illness. Unfortunately, Cathy lost her battle to cancer and he wanted to acknowledge how she was a huge asset to the Village.

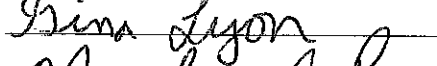
Nathan also thanks Justin, Jackie, and Shelia for all their assistance and help over the years.

Article 15: To Adjourn.

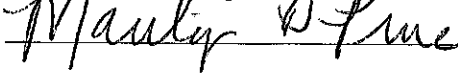
Leonidas Zenonos motioned to Adjourn; Nathan Sicard seconded. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:43 PM.


Shelia Martin
Village Clerk

Acceptance of forewritten minutes by the Trustees:



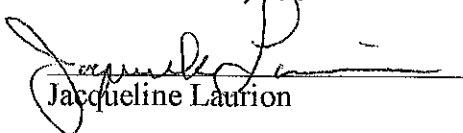
Gina Lyon



Marilyn Prue

Acceptance of the forewritten minutes by the Moderator:


Nathan Sicard


Jacqueline Laurion