

Barton Village, Inc.
Special Trustees Meeting

Monday, April 1, 2024

6:00pm

Barton Town Office

Attendance: Ryan Racine (Selectboard Member), Dee McDowell (Selectboard Member), Regina Lyon (Trustee), Marilyn Prue (Trustee), Ellis Merchant (Trustee), Vera LaPorte (Business Manager), Leigh Curtis and Members of the Borderline Ridge Riders

Agenda

- A. **Call to Order** – Ryan Racine called the meeting to order at 6:02pm.
- B. **Changes to the Agenda/Additions or Deletions** – None on behalf of Barton Village.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- C. **Request for Grant Funding** – Barton Village Board of Trustees Chair Gina Lyon read aloud a letter addressed to the Selectboard requesting \$40,000 in grant funding for the Village's salt/sand shed. The letter referenced the Town's Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG) fund dissolution and transfer to the Town's Highway Department of \$541,990.94, final loan to For the Love of Food of \$50,000, and that the BOT was requesting \$40,000 from the Town's Miscellaneous Grant Fund. Ryan Racine stated that he was not sure that it was appropriate for one municipality to grant money to another municipality, and that the intent of the UDAG was to loan money to small businesses and improve housing stock. Dee McDowell stated that she believed the funds were also partly intended for non-profit organizations, but that she was unsure and would seek clarification from Town Clerk Kristin Atwood.

Gina Lyon noted the outstanding balances for loans given from the UDAG and asked what would happen to those funds if they were repaid since the UDAG no longer existed. Ryan Racine said that he assumed the funds would return to the UDAG but did not know. Gina Lyon then noted that the Town, as a municipality, dissolved the UDAG fund and moved the money to the Town's Highway Department when the fund was intended for use by the entire town (including both villages). Dee McDowell agreed that it should have been available to everybody. Gina Lyon continued by pointing out that the Village taxpayers do not pay highway tax to the Town as they are taxed for their own Highway Department, and that while the Town and the Village work well together in times of need and that the Village intends for this to continue, she wondered how the Town's absorption of the UDAG fund into the Highway Department benefitted the two villages.

Ryan Racine asked why the salt/sand shed was estimated to cost \$310,000. Ellis Merchant explained that the original engineer was providing his expertise for free but had since removed himself from the project and that the Village needed to hire a new engineer to complete the

project. He further explained that the project was put on hold for several years because of the Covid-19 pandemic and since then construction costs had risen. Ryan Racine asked where the Village intended to construct the salt/sand shed. Gina Lyon informed him that it would be placed near the Village's municipal garage. Ellis Merchant then stated that the old salt/sand shed on High Street was no longer usable by the Village. Dee McDowell asked how the Village intended to fund the rest of the salt/sand shed and Gina Lyon explained that the Village would be forced to borrow the money since the taxpayers do not wish to be taxed any further.

Gina Lyon then requested to be able to clarify an issue regarding the winter maintenance agreement between the Village and the Town. She stated that the State would no longer assist the Village with plowing the State roads within the Village and that the Village needed to replace a truck and hire additional crew to make up for this loss, and as such would no longer need the Town's assistance. She stated that some Village residents had expressed dismay at the Village's Annual Meeting that the BOT would not be seeking to continue this agreement and that the Town's budget had been impacted by lack of notification. Gina Lyon apologized for not notifying the Town about the \$13,000 shortfall that would be created by not renewing the agreement. Ryan Racine and Dee McDowell assured the BOT that it was of no concern and that they appreciated that the BOT was being proactive regarding the Village's winter maintenance needs.

Ryan Racine requested time for the Selectboard to consider the BOT's request before making their decision. The BOT agreed but asked that the Selectboard make their decision before the next Village meeting on 04/30/2024, if possible.

OTHER ITEMS:

- D. **Other Business** – None.

- E. **Adjourn** – The Board of Trustees concluded their business with the Selectboard at 6:45pm and adjourned.

Upcoming Meetings:

Regular Board Meeting: April 8, 2024

Regular Board Meeting: April 22, 2024