

Barton Village, Inc.
Special Informational Meeting
Barton Village Hydro Facility Upgrades

Monday, September 9, 2024

6:00pm

Barton Village Memorial Hall

Attendance:

Gina Lyon (Chair), Marilyn Prue (Trustee), Ellis Merchant (Trustee), Vera LaPorte (Business Manager), Crystal Currier (VPPSA), Denis Fortin (Hydro Plant Manager), Jacqueline Laurion (Clerk), Matthew Wilson (The Chronicle), Mackenzie Shanahan, Susan Penharlow, Donna Walsh, John Warren, Ed Helm, Adrien Helm, Bret Thayer, Lori Thayer, Paul Sicard, Jay Walbert, Pete Ferrantino, Jennifer Mayor, Christian Carey, David Billado, Bob Ferlazo

Agenda

Audio recording of the meeting can be found at <https://bartonvt.com/agenda-minutes/>

- A. **Call to Order** – Gina Lyon called the meeting to order at 6:02pm.
- B. **Changes to the Agenda/Additions/Deletions** – None.
- C. **Privilege of the Floor** – Gina Lyon made a motion to move Privilege of the Floor to Discussion Items. Marilyn Prue Seconded. Motion carried.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- D. **Hydro Facility Upgrade Presentation with Denis Fortin and Crystal Currier (20 minutes)** – Crystal Currier (VPPSA) addressed the audience to review all financial aspects of the hydro facility upgrades. Copies of the presentation were handed out to everyone in attendance and can also be found on the Barton Village website [here](#). Plant Manager Denis Fortin then spoke to the audience regarding the structural components of the project, mainly that the penstock that needs replacement was designed to last for 80 years and is currently aged year 82.
- E. **Q&A** – To follow is a selection of questions asked by members of the audience. Questions are in **black** and answers are in **red**:
 - Adrien Helm – Did not ask a question but wanted to clarify that voting can be only done by the registered voters of the Village and not the Town. **Yes. [According to 24 V.S.A. 1822 \(b\)\(1\)](#) only the registered voters of Barton Village are permitted to vote.**
 - Donna Walsh – Where is the hydro facility? **West Charleston, VT. The Village has owned the facility on the Clyde River since the late 1800s.**

- Christian Carey – What is the rate on financing? The figures in the presentation are based on a fixed 3% interest rate.
- Ed Helm – Is it possible to have a copy of this presentation emailed? Yes. It is available on the [Barton Village website](#) and can be emailed. Have you applied for any grants? Yes. Unfortunately, the Village was not awarded any. Some grants can only be applied for once per year and the Village had already applied for them on behalf of the new salt/sand shed. Would the historic nature of the plant help with funding the upgrades? No.
- John Warren – Did not ask a question but expressed concern about losing the hydro facility if the bond vote did not pass.
- Bret Thayer – If 30% of electricity comes from the hydro facility, where does the other 70% come from? Barton Village, through Vermont Public Power Supply Authority (VPPSA), buys its electricity from 10-12 different producers. Barton Village’s Integrated Resource Plan (IRP), which details its electric portfolio, can be found [here](#).
- Paul Sicard – Can Vermont Emergency Management (VEM) provide a new generator since it is a safety requirement? Yes, but outreach has yielded no results. Has any thought been given to lining the penstock? Yes, but it is more expensive than steel and generation would be reduced because the carbon fiber sleeve is several inches thick, causing less water to flow through the existing penstock. Has the Village researched the availability of the items needed in the upgrade? Yes. The transformer is the only item that will not be made immediately available, as the lead time on receiving the type of transformer required is approximately 18 months. This is why construction would not begin until 2025. When will you receive the results from the facility inspection on 09/10/2024 with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR), Dubois & King and VT Fish & Wildlife? Would it make sense to delay the vote until the results are received? The inspection on 09/10/2024 was not planned at the time the bond vote was scheduled. While it is possible that the results of the inspection may be available before the bond vote, it is very likely that the outcome will remain the same and that FERC may require more upgrades than proposed. What about renewable energy credits (RECs)? While the exact dollar amount was not immediately at hand, it is estimated that Barton Village received approximately \$125,000 in RECs in 2023 because of the hydro facility. Does the Village have any intent to sell the electric utility? No. The electric utility is doing well in partnership with Orleans Village. Barton Village has a 5-year maintenance services contract with VPPSA to broker those services, and VPPSA has a contract with Orleans Village to provide those services. Are the contracts available for public viewing? Yes. They are in the Trustee meeting minutes and can be emailed.

- Adrien Helm – Will there be a campaign to ensure the Village voters vote yes? **Yes.** The project has been advertised in the Chronicle and on the Village website, sent to all ratepayers via direct mailings, and spoken about at an open house held at the hydro facility and at several regular Board of Trustees meetings. There will be a second open house on 09/14/2024 and a second informational meeting on 09/19/2024, as well as a letter to the editor published in the Chronicle.
- Bob Ferlazo – Three years ago when the Village tried to sell the electric utility, the company interested in buying it did not want the hydro plant. **Yes.** Vermont Electric Co-op (VEC), the company interested in purchasing the electric utility, is not in the business of producing electricity. Additionally, it was later decided by the previous Board of Trustees that the hydro facility was an asset and no longer part of the sale.
- Crystal Currier – Did not ask a question but stated that even though she was not a Village resident nor ratepayer, she nonetheless advocated for the bond vote to pass. Upgrading the hydro facility would be beneficial to the community.

F. **Adjourn** – Gina Lyon made a motion to adjourn at 7:29pm. Marilyn Prue seconded. Motion carried.

Upcoming Meetings:

Regular Board Meeting: 09/09/2024 (directly following informational meeting)

Hydro Facility Open House: 09/14/2024

Special Informational Meeting: 09/19/2024

Special Village Meeting: 09/20/2024

Regular Board Meeting: 09/23/2024