

Barton Village, Inc.
Regular Trustees Meeting
Monday, November 11, 2024
6:15 PM
Barton Village Memorial Hall

Attendance: Gina Lyon (Chair), Marilyn Prue (Trustee), Vera LaPorte (Business Manager), Amy Braun (Lead Finance/HR), Jacqueline Laurion (Clerk), Ken Nolan (VPPSA), Ed Barber (Newport Daily News), Denis Fortin (Manager of Hydro Power Plant), Shelia Martin, Johanna Pastel

Agenda

Full agenda with additional details can be found at <https://bartonvt.com/agenda-minutes/>

Audio recording of the meeting can be found for 30 days following the official approval of these minutes at the next Regular Board of Trustees Meeting on November 25, 2024 at <https://bartonvt.com/agenda-minutes/>

- A. **Call to Order:** Gina Lyon called the meeting to order at 6:15pm.
- B. **Changes to the Agenda/Additions or Deletions:** Jacqueline noticed there were two Agenda G items in the packet. The Warrant reflected correctly, but the packet had an error.
- C. **Privilege of the Floor:** Johanna Pastel of Lake Region Theater would like to use the Theater and Hall from January 2nd to February 16th with performance dates of 2/13,2/14,2/15th. A security deposit of \$1,500 was offered to the Village and Gina Lyon suggested a security deposit of \$500.00 instead. Gina Lyon made a motion to allow Lake Region Theater use of the Theater and Hall for the from January 2nd to February 16th with performance dates of 2/13,2/14,2/15th. Marilyn Prue seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS:

- D. **Minutes from the Regular Board of Trustees Meeting October 28, 2024.:** Gina Lyon would like to have the minutes from 10/28/2024 amended to reflect that she stated the Trustees could not offer Andy Sicard the Village Truck to take home in the evenings as he had requested.
- E. **Bills and Warrants: Marilyn Prue has reviewed the bills and warrants and they were set for approval.** Gina Lyon made a motion to accept the bills and warrants as presented and reviewed. Marilyn Prue seconded. Motion carried.
- F. **Short-Term Financing for Hydro Projects: - (Hydro Projects LOC)**
As the Board is aware, we are starting to move forward with the design and engineering for the various hydro projects and starting to work on those projects that are outside the

scope of the engineering (Generator, fuel tank). We are already receiving interim bills from Dubois & King for their work and we will have more costs coming in as we move forward.

The goal is to enter into long-term financing with the Vermont Municipal Bond Bank (VMBB). The VMBB only accepts applications and funds twice per year – applications due in December get funded in Jan/Feb and applications in May get funded in Jun/Jul. Unfortunately, once funded the full loan amount gets advanced to the bond trustee. Barton Village would not be required to pay principal but would be required to pay interest on the full loan amount. Given that we would not be drawing on the funds, the interest could be partially mitigated by investing the unused portion of funds. That said, even with a mitigated interest cost, it will likely cost more to fund the full loan amount rather than only paying interest to a local lender for the amount that has been drawn as the majority of costs won't likely occur until summer/fall of 2025.

Example:

Amount Borrowed via VMBB	\$3,000,000
Mitigated Interest Rate	1.5%
Estimated Annual Cost	\$45,000
Amount Borrowed prior to Jul25	\$250,000
LOC Interest Rate	5.0%
Estimated Annual Cost	\$12,500

We have received initial interest from two local lenders – Community National Bank and Passumpsic Bank. The letter of interest from Community National Bank is attached and I have confirmed the rate (5.0%) as of today remains in the ballpark. I received an initial rate indication from Passumpsic Bank (5.35%, on 10/24) but have not received anything in writing.

Based on this information, I would recommend Barton enter into a LOC with Community National Bank for a period not-to-exceed one year, then apply to the VMBB in their spring application process (likely due in May). This would provide Barton with funding for the smaller projects and a timeframe that will allow for cross-over time to get everything in place with the VMBB.

As a reminder, Barton has both PUC approval and voter approval so once approved as noted below, Barton will instruct CNB to prepare the loan documents for approval at a Hydro Generator/Fuel Tank/Heater.

Gina Lyon made a motion to move forward with Community National Bank to open a Line-of-Credit in an amount not-to-exceed \$3.0 million for a period not-to-exceed 12 months. Marilyn Prue seconded the motion. The motion carried.

- G. **Hydro Generator/Fuel Tank/Heater:** The first of the hydro projects is the purchase and installation of a backup generator and related fuel tank. Outreach was made to three companies to obtain interest and pricing for the Generator – MEI, The Farmyard Store and Brookfield Services and three companies for the fuel tank and heater – Bournes, The Farmyard Store and Fred's Energy. After several attempts contacting the vendors, we have only received interest and pricing from MEI for the generator and Fred's Energy for the heater and fuel tank. MEI has

indicated that once they receive approval, they can get the backup generator and switchgear in place quickly.

The quotes from MEI and Fred’s are attached for the Board’s information. You will see that the amount on each quote is less than the amount listed in the proposed motion, this is to allow for any unexpected changes and hopefully, will eliminate the need to delay the installations if such changes occur and the pricing changes slightly. Anything above the “not-to-exceed” amounts will be brought back to the Board for further consideration.

Gina Lyon made a motion to approve the quote from MEI in an amount not to exceed \$60,000 for the backup generator, switchgear and installation and the quote from Fred’s Energy in an amount not to exceed \$5,500 for the fuel tank. Marilyn Prue seconded the motion. The motion carried.

H. Revised Warrant to the Delinquent Tax Collector for Water/Sewer/Electric Accounts:

At the previous Regular Trustees Meeting on 10/28/2024 the Board approved a Warrant to the Delinquent Tax Collector for Water/Sewer/Electric Accounts. One customer paid before the warrant could be sent to the Delinquent Tax Collector, necessitating a revision. Six (6) water/sewer/electric accounts are delinquent by over six (6) months and should be turned over to the Delinquent Tax Collector for collection. The total delinquency is \$4,417.98.

Service Location	Water	Sewer	Electric	Total
100 Glover Road*	\$165.62	\$272.01	\$110.64	\$548.27
6 Park Street*	\$220.43	\$379.18		\$599.61
3 Lake Street*	\$326.73	\$506.94		\$833.67
271 Elm Street*	\$326.73	\$506.94		\$833.67
165 Water Street*	\$272.04	\$430.69		\$702.73
184 Glover Road	\$354.46	\$545.57		\$900.03
			TOTAL	\$4,417.98

* Previously turned over to the Delinquent Tax Collector

Gina Lyon made a motion to approve the revised warrant to the delinquent tax collector for collections of delinquent water/sewer/electric accounts as presented. Marilyn Prue seconded the motion. The motion carried.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- I. **Advanced Metering Infrastructure** - (Ken Nolan, VPPSA) lead the discussion on the future of Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) in Barton Village. AMI Benefits would be automatically reads using radio frequency in 15 minute increments. kWh and kVar quantities in both directions. Net metering can be read on all meters. Allows power factors to be calculated. Remote disconnect/reconnect. Tamper notifications, outage notifications. Remote read and pinging capability. Easier engineering analysis and preventive analytics. With GIS provides visualization of system conditions.

Barton needs to decide by March of 2025 if they want to be part of this AMI project. 10 of the 11 Vermont electric utilities have signed on. Barton Village is the only one that has not signed up yet. Orleans, Hardwick, Enosburg, Johnson, Ludlow, Jacksonville, Northfield & Swanton have signed on to the AMI just to name a few. Green Mountain Power, Vermont Electric, and Burlington Electric have been using AMI since 2016.

VPPSA must report to PUC by April of 2025. Barton would be in the 3rd tranche starting work in late 2025 or early 2026. Currently this proposal does not include water. Just electric.

This part of the project will cost Barton Village; Gross Capital costs = \$641,541.00 LESS the Grant funding of \$312,128. **NET Capital Cost of \$329,414.00.** VPPSA can finance 5.28% with a 10yr term =\$43,300 per year. Annual operations and maintenance cost \$20,000 with total cost being \$63,300 per year.

Customers would be able to track usage. Questions about high bill or very low billing, the Village office can easily identify the issue.

With this system, verbal contact must be made prior to shutting them down. Once the bill is paid or brought up to date there is still going to be a potential 24hr reconnect timeframe depending on the time of day the bill is brought up to par. Example: If a person comes to the Village office at 3:50pm and the office closes at 4pm, the chances of the power getting turned back on that same date won't happen.

The customer has the option to keep the current electric meter they have now or change over to the new AMI meter. Under Vermont statute the customer can't be forced to change, but the benefits have proven to benefit the customer as well as the town / village.

The new AMI meters would last up to 15 years. Meter replacement would be a utility expense for current owners with the "old style" non-AMI meter. If a new construction takes place, then the homeowner will be responsible for buying the AMI meter.

The Trustees will table this decision until February, 2025. But start a campaign to inform Barton Electric customers in January.

J. **Flood Update**

Timeline of Events

- 07/10/2024 – Hurricane Beryl flood event.
- 08/02/2024 – Governor Scott requested assistance.
- 08/15/2024 – Shortfall in FEMA Public Assistance announced and Immediate Needs Funding (INF) implemented.
- 08/20/2024 – FEMA DR-4810 declared.
- 08/23/2024 – Assistance applicant briefing with Vermont Emergency Management (VEM).
- 08/27/2024 – NVDA and STANTEC inspection.

- 09/04/2024 – FEMA/VEM Environmental Planning and Historic Compliance During Disaster Recovery “green sheet” received.
- 09/20/2024 – News Release with important information on how to apply for FEMA assistance for DR-4810:
 - Go online to DisasterAssistance.gov
 - Call the FEMA Helpline at 800-621-3362
 - Download FEMA’s Mobile App
 - Visit a Disaster Recovery Center. For location and hours, visit fema.gov/drc
 - The application deadline is October 21, 2024 – DEADLINE HAS PASSED
- 09/20/2024 – News Release with important information on how to apply for Physical Disaster Loans through the Small Business Administration (SBA) for DR-4810:
 - Schedule an in-person appointment at the SBA Disaster Recovery Center in advance
 - Go online to sba.gov/disaster
 - Call the SBA’s Customer Service Center at 800-659-2955 or email disastercustomerservice@sba.gov
 - The application deadline is October 21, 2024 – DEADLINE EXTENDED TO NOVEMBER 25, 2024
- 09/27/2024 – Received STANTEC/NVDA RIVER project recommendation to buyout/elevate homes on Glover Road and Elm Street. “Due to the steep topography, and the use restrictions on the only open parcel where flood storage could occur, the best solution to mitigate flooding here is to buyout the parcels/homes that are experiencing flooding. Recommend structure elevation or mitigation reconstruction as an alternative.” Subsequent meetings have determined that no projects in Barton Village will be recommended at this time.
- 10/03/2024 – “Kickoff” call with VEM consultant for July 2024 storm (DR-4810).
- 10/09/2024 – Exploratory call with VEM/FEMA PDMG to go over Disaster Inventory for DR-4810.
- 10/25/2024 – Disaster Inventory submitted for DR-4810.
- 11/01/2024 – Federal cost share for July 2023 storm (DR-4720) increased to 90%.
- 11/07/2024 – Final project for DR-4720 Category Z (administrative costs) submitted.

Buyouts

- Grant awards for DR-4720 buyouts cannot be made until after FEMA’s INF is lifted.
- Two property owners have completed the buyout paperwork.
- One property owner interested in the elevation program has since withdrawn interest.
- The deadline for submitting buyouts/elevations for DR-4720 has passed. Anyone interested in a buyout/elevation will need to apply under DR-4810.
- Email from VEM on 09/19/2024 requested that municipalities update the property owners on FEMA’s funding issues. Both property owners updated on 09/19/2024.

DPW

- Lincoln Avenue
 - Initial research by VT State Rail and Aviation Bureau indicates the aqueduct is not owned by the railroad. STANTEC has no information to provide at this time, however David Snedeker with NVDA has offered to assist with applying for grant funding for legal/surveying fees if the Village wishes to take ownership.
- Ball Field
 - The softball association has moved to Glover and will not be able to assist with cleanup and guidance.
- High Street/St. Paul's Cemetery Access Road
 - Culvert/road is currently stable and will be addressed with FEMA Hazard Mitigation.
 - Guard rail will be installed the week of 11/11/2024.
- Pageant Park Road Culvert
 - Replacement culvert is in and tentative schedule is the week of 11/18/2024. Affected residents will be notified when schedule is confirmed.

K. Department Operations Updates:

Electric Department

- After-hours on-call answering service will be changed to New England Call Center ASAP.
- Tariff rider has been submitted to the PUC and is pending review.
- Ken Nolan (VPPSA) will be attending the Regular BOT Meeting on 11/11/2024 to continue discussions about Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI).

Wastewater Department

- Glover Agreement – More sampling will be required to determine if high strength flow from Glover is typical or just a fluke. Wastewater Operator Nate Therrien to Establish sampling schedule. Part of the agreement is based on BOD, which According to the current data is higher than what is provided for in the agreement.
- Facility Upgrade – Need potential dates for touring the Hardwick facility. The Trustees will put something on the books for January of 2025.
- Vera LaPorte, Amy Braun, Emily Marlow, Julie Nelson, and Crystal Currier attended a training for El Dorado (utility billing software) on 11/08/2024.
- The wastewater treatment facility continues to operate well and all reporting deadlines are being met.

Water Department

- The Vermont Bond Bank Small System Capacity and Resiliency Program (SCRIP) Tier II grant applications are currently being accepted. Backup generators Unfortunately, do not meet the criteria but refurbishing the carbon filters may, as well as the previously purchased chlorine analyzer. Applications are due 12/02/2024.
- A recent audit of water/sewer accounts produced several meters that are underperforming or may not be reading at all. DPW Foreman Andy Sicard and DPW Utility Worker Garrett Heath are working on testing/replacing them.

- The water treatment facility continues to operate well and all reporting deadlines are being met.

Highway Department

- The failing culvert on Eastern Avenue has apparently been a known issue since 2021. Andy Sicard and Garrett Heath have shored up the area with riprap and ditching. This project may be eligible for grant funding through the 2026 Vermont Better Roads Program (20% grant match if project is \$60,000 or less). Applications are due 12/27/2024.
- Salt/sand shed – Tyler Billingsly is sending the Request for Proposal (RFP) to VT Rural Development for review ahead of the bid phase.
- Ditching around the Village has begun with Roaring Brook Road, Glover Road, Vigario Lane, and High Street in particular focus.
- The 2012 International has been rewired and is working as it should. Inspection is pending the arrival of a replacement license plate that was damaged during paving. The sander can now be placed on the 2012 International truck and used.
- See Flood Update for additional information.

Village Department

- School crossing signs – All the prep work has been done to install the signs but they are more expensive than originally anticipated (over \$5,000). Currently getting more quotes from suppliers.
- The BOT inspected Washington Terrace (TH422) on 08/21/2024 as part of the process of discontinuing the road. Vera LaPorte working on an easement with Kevin Henry at Primmer & Piper and the final report.
- The ATV Ordinance amendment was published in the Chronicle on 10/23/2024 and posted at the Village office, C&C Supermarket, Post Office, Community National Bank, and the Barton Public Library. This will go into effect on 12/13/2024.
- See Flood update for additional information.

OTHER ITEMS:

L. Other Business:

- Gina Lyon spoke about the Barton Village celebration on 11/23/2024 1pm-3pm. Cake, balloons and a festive party to be hosted at the Barton Memorial Hall.
- The retirement party for Crystal Currier for 11/16/2024 was moved to Spring of 2025.
- The Village office phone system has been updated to reflect the correct office staff.
- Cell phones for Village staff that are out on the road and need (Vera, Andy, Nate & Lucas) to use when they send photos or communications to the office staff for a variety of reasons. (Broken meters, down power lines) etc. Vera LaPorte will start the process of Village owned cell phones. For anyone that does not want a work cell phone, a \$40.00 stipend will be given to the person and use of personal cell phone will be required. A cell phone contract will be drawn up for each Village employee to sign.
- Amy Braun states her training is going well, a conversation about office layout and desk arrangement to make the office more welcoming to visitors.

- Crystal Currier will review with Amy the task list that she has created for the day-to-day office operations. Cross training.
- Crystal Currier has offered to stay on with assisting Barton Village after she retires from VPPSA. She would be paid her usual rate, less benefits. So, it would be a lower hourly rate.
- Barton Village received a grant from Municipal Grants for Aid for the 2023 Ditching that took place on Pageant Park Road & Eastern Avenue. The Village was paid ½ of the \$11,500 Barton Village also applied for a grant in 2024 and the projects chosen for that was not determined. Vera LaPorte will speak with Andy Sicard to identify what projects he chose to apply to the 2024 Grant application.

EXECUTIVE SESSION ITEMS:

- M. Executive Session - Legal Action: 1 V.S.A. § 313 (a)(1)(E) – **None.**
- N. Executive Session - Personnel: 1 V.S.A. § 313 (a)(3) - **Gina made a motion 8:42pm to go into Executive Session. They adjourned at 9:20pm with no action taken.**
- O. **Adjourn:** Gina Lyon made a motion to adjourn at 9:20pm. Marilyn Prue 2nd. Motion carried.

Upcoming Meetings:

Regular Board Meeting: 11/25/2024

Regular Board Meeting: 12/09/2024