

Barton Village, Inc.
Regular Trustees Meeting

Monday, December 9, 2024

6:00 PM

Barton Village Memorial Hall

Attendance: Gina Lyon (Chair), Marilyn Prue (Trustee), Vera LaPorte (Business Manager),
James Coe (Coe + Coe Architecture), David Billado

Agenda

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

Audio recording of this meeting can be found for 30 days following the official approval of these
minutes at the next Regular Board of Trustees Meeting on December 23, 2024 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 or Deletions** – Marilyn Prue asked to discuss a small electric rate increase. Vera LaPorte informed her that she intended to address the topic during Item K - Department Operations Updates. Gina Lyon and Marilyn Prue agreed to discuss it then.
- C. **Privilege of the Floor** – None.

ACTION ITEMS:

- D. **Minutes from the Regular Board of Trustees Meeting November 25, 2024** – Gina Lyon made a motion to approve the Minutes from the Regular Board of Trustees Meeting November 25, 2024 as presented. Marilyn Prue seconded. All approved and the motion carried.
- E. **Minutes from the Special Board of Trustees Meeting December 4, 2024** – Gina Lyon made a motion to approve the Minutes from the Special Board of Trustees Meeting December 4, 2024 as presented. Marilyn Prue seconded. All approved and the motion carried.
- F. **Bills and Warrants** – Gina Lyon made a motion to approve the Bills and Warrants as reviewed by Marilyn Prue. Marilyn Prue seconded. All approved and the motion carried.
- G. **2025 Employee Benefit Proposal (Non-IBEW)** – Gina Lyon stated that she had reviewed the Village’s personnel policy and that she could not find any requirement that the Village offer health benefits in line with that of IBEW. Vera LaPorte explained that it was not explicitly stated in the policy, but that it was what the Village had historically done. Marilyn Prue stated that she thought that was what the Village had usually done as well. Gina Lyon asked Marilyn Prue her opinion on the suggested plans and Marilyn Prue stated that even though it was difficult to directly compare the IBEW benefits to the BCBS plans (IBEW includes dental, vision, long/short-

term disability, and life insurance), she thought that the BCBS Gold plan that Amy Braun (Lead Finance/HR) had presented was the closest they were going to get in terms of the expense and deductible. She also explained that the 25% opt-out option for employees who choose not to receive Village health benefits was ultimately less expensive to the Village in the long run. After discussion, Gina Lyon made a motion to approve the BCBS Gold and Delta Dental plans and opt-out option as presented. Marilyn Prue seconded. All approved and the motion carried.

- H. **Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP) Grant** – Vera LaPorte reached out to Buildings and General Services (BGS) with additional questions regarding the grant. She explained that the main takeaways were that BGS would allow scope changes as the projects developed if they were deemed unfeasible, and while the Village would not be obligated to install resiliency measures (solar/EV charger), they would be obligated to use the entire grant (see full list of questions/comments at <https://bartonvt.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/12.09.2024-Barton-Village-Agenda-for-Regular-Meeting-wBackup.pdf>). Gina Lyon asked to confirm that invoice payments would be monthly instead of at the end of the year, and Vera LaPorte explained it would be as invoices are submitted and could be multiple times per month if necessary.

Marilyn Prue stated that the grant was rather unique in that it did not ask for a percentage match, which could sometimes be a barrier to small municipalities. That, paired with the quick turnaround on payments, made her seriously consider accepting the grant.

Gina Lyon asked Vera LaPorte whether she believed that the projects could be executed by the 12/31/2026 deadline. Marilyn Prue expressed concern that since so many municipalities in the area had also received the MERP grant that they would be in heavy competition for contractors/vendors. Vera LaPorte explained that if contracts were in place by the 12/31/2026 deadline BGS would honor the grant. She also stated that she would like to use some of the grant to hire a project manager to keep them on track as the amount of work involved was intimidating.

James Coe (Coe + Coe Architecture) stated that he is currently helping some municipalities with their MERP grant and that it allows for up to 20% of it to be spent on project management. Gina Lyon stated that she would also be more comfortable with a project manager taking the lead. Marilyn Prue agreed.

Gina Lyon made a motion to approve the Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP) Grant of \$303,012.45 as presented. Marilyn Prue seconded. All approved and the motion carried.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- I. Coe + Coe: Barton Motors Site – James Coe of Coe + Coe Architecture presented the Board with an updated plan for the Barton Motors site. The plan in its current iteration consists of townhomes, apartments, and commercial/retail space. He explained that while ambitious, the project will be constructed in phases and may reduce in size as it develops. Gina Lyon asked what happened to the “big box” store element that had appeared on previous plans. James Coe stated that it was replaced with approximately 30 apartments because of the current housing shortage in the area and believed that Barton’s central location was perfect for housing many local workers.

Gina Lyon wondered about the impact of so many housing units on the Village's water and wastewater infrastructure. Vera LaPorte stated that they would have to investigate it since more had been added since the project had first been introduced.

James Coe stated that it is a years-long project that will require some partnership with the Village, citing flooding concerns with the concrete aqueduct that divides the Barton Motors site from the Circle K. Both Gina Lyon and Vera LaPorte assured him that they were still researching it.

Gina Lyon asked if the apartments were intended to be low-income housing. James Coe stated that to receive federal tax credits/funding for low-income housing the project would have to fall under the local State housing authority (Rural Edge). Rural Edge so far has had no interest in the project, which he believed to be moot because there is a need for more middle-market housing in the area.

Gina Lyon asked about the timeline for construction. James Coe stated that he would like to begin at least pouring concrete for one of the buildings by late 2025 to build momentum, otherwise a 4-5 yearlong project could easily become 10+. Coe + Coe Architecture is currently building a website on the project where the public can stay informed as development begins.

- J. **Flood Update** – For the full timeline of events please visit <https://bartonvt.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/12.09.2024-Barton-Village-Agenda-for-Regular-Meeting-wBackup.pdf>

Highlights

- Ball field deed restrictions – None found yet.
- High Street guard rail – Installed 11/27/2024.

Gina Lyon asked if Vera LaPorte had any luck with adding the Doyle Lane pond dredging to the FEMA Disaster Inventory. Vera LaPorte stated that the project has been added, but that there might be another solution that she planned on discussing in Item K – Department Operation Updates.

- K. **Department Operations Updates** – For full list of updates please visit <https://bartonvt.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/12.09.2024-Barton-Village-Agenda-for-Regular-Meeting-wBackup.pdf>

Electric

- Tariff rider – Response to PUC is currently under review by the attorney and will be submitted by the 12/11/2024 deadline.
- Rate increase – Steve Farman (VPPSA) is aware of the Village's desire to begin the process of implementing a small rate increase ahead of the hydroelectric project (2-3%) but because most of the VPPSA members are also requesting rate increases his time is very limited. Requesting one now will give the electric utility enough lead time to have it in place by the time the bulk of the hydroelectric project will begin.
- Grattan Line Construction Corp. began working on broadband make-ready work 12/02/2024.

- Disconnection rules – New language pertaining to renters/landlords added to disconnection notices.

Wastewater Department

- Glover Agreement – Sampling began on 12/04/2024 and will continue monthly for the foreseeable future.
- Wastewater project schedule – Mike Mainer with Aldrich & Elliott has supplied the Village with a preliminary project schedule placing the bond vote for the project in May or June. If the bond vote is passed soon enough, funding can be in place to support the lagoon cleanout in 2025. If not, the lagoon cleanout may have to proceed without additional funding.

Water Department

- NOAV dated 11/08/2024 – Letters sent to water customers on 12/05/2024 and certified with the State on 12/06/2024.
- Chief Operator Lucas DiMauro is exploring the idea of blending the water from May Pond with the water from the well, which is a common method of diluting organics/pollutants in public surface water treatment systems. Diluting the sources with each other has the potential to bring both radionuclide and trihalomethane levels within safe limits. He has taken several samples and sent them off for testing. If results are favorable the Doyle Lane project may be abandoned.

Highway Department

- The 2012 International is having trouble with the drive shaft. DPW Utility Worker Garrett Heath will attempt to make the repair while DPW Foreman Andrew Sicard is on vacation 12/09/2024-12/13/2024. If the repair cannot be made in-house it will be taken to Pepin's Truck Repair.

Village

- Vera LaPorte requested that Gina Lyon make a Facebook post about closing the office to walk-ins from 9:00am-9:30am on 12/10/2024 for a staff meeting.

OTHER ITEMS:

- L. **Other Business** – Gina Lyon requested the use of the Barton Memorial Building Hall every second Thursday of each month for the Orleans County Fairgrounds Association's board meetings. She will give Vera LaPorte the signed rental agreement when complete.

Gina Lyon made a motion to enter Executive Session for the purpose of discussing Legal Action: 1 V.S.A. § 313 (a)(1)(E) and Personnel: 1 V.S.A. § 313 (a)(3). Marilyn Prue seconded. All approved and the motion carried.

EXECUTIVE SESSION ITEMS:

- M. **Executive Session - Legal Action: 1 V.S.A. § 313 (a)(1)(E)** – No action taken.
- N. **Executive Session - Personnel: 1 V.S.A. § 313 (a)(3)** – No action taken.

- O. **Adjourn** – Gina Lyon made a motion to adjourn. Marilyn Prue seconded. All approved and the motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15pm.

Upcoming Meetings:

Regular Board Meeting: 12/23/2024

Regular Board Meeting: 01/13/2025