

Barton Village, Inc.
Special Trustees Meeting
Monday, June 5, 2023
6:00 pm
Barton Village Memorial Building

Attendance:

Gina Lyon (chair), Marilyn Prue, Ellis Merchant, Ken Nolan, (VPPSA) Crystal Currier, (VPPSA)
Joseph Gresser (Barton Chronicle), Jacqueline Laurion (Clerk)

MINUTES

- A. Call to Order: 6:10pm by Gina Lyon
 - B. Changes to the Agenda/Additions or Deletions - None
 - C. Privilege of the Floor: None
- Action Items: None

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- D. Electric Department
 - a. **Updates** – Ongoing Activities
 - **High Street** - additional soil testing took place on the 25th & 26th of May. Further testing of soil would be done on 6/8. Based on those results, it could mean additional testing is needed. A report will come out in late summer with the findings and next steps for remediation.
 - **Hydro Plant** - Voltage regulator is repaired but has not been delivered and/or installed yet. The Caretakers building is torn down and has been fully removed from the property. Work began on the diesel generators building on 6/2/2023. The fuel oil tank removal is still pending. The largest ticket is still the Penstock - Major upgrade will require a Village vote and PUC approval. Cost is estimated around 1 million dollars.
 - **Integrated Resource Plan** - Ken Nolan, from VPPSA spoke about the IRP review; utilities have to do a IRP every 3 years. It prompts the utility to look down the road and review long term financial goals, long term projects and what direction the utility is heading in. VPPSA filed on behalf of Barton Village Electric on 3/5/2023. It is a regulatory filing sent to the Public Utility Commission and the Vermont Department of Public Service and allows for public comment. A notice was placed in the Barton Chronicle and no public comments were submitted for the filing.

When filing with the PUC, they only consider if you reviewed the utilities' financial foundations and if the decision-making process was sound. We now await questions from the PUC. VPPSA will answer these questions. It is expected that the utility may be asked to have an engineering study done on what it would take to meet electrification demands on the utility, meaning more homes purchasing heat pumps, changing over to electric cars. The future is moving towards electric,

and more scrutiny is being put on utilities to support this initiative. Forecasting will be needed for Barton regarding these items and load growth to the electric grid.

- **Rate Case-** Surcharge has been applied to all electric bills. 21 questions from the Vermont Department of Public Service came in and VPPSA responded to them. From those responses VDPS came back with 3 additional questions. VPPSA is in the process of responding. So far everything seems par for the course and no red flags have come up currently. After this round of questions, the rate case moves to the Public Utility Commission. VPPSA cautions that the commission will do a deeper dive into the rate case given the position BVE is in and the higher operating costs.
- Discussion on the electric department moved to the expense of the VPPSA contract with Barton. Ken Nolan noted that the contract was priced as a top tier contract due to it only being a 2-year contract since it was expected that another try at selling the utility would take place. The service consists of a 2-man crew from Northline out of NY and has been proactive vs being in a reactive position. Line maintenance, pole replacements and daily line reviews are taking place now under this contract. Ken Nolan also provided documents showing Barton's standing in line with other state utilities. Before the rate increase Barton was the 4th highest in the state, and with the increase we are now the 3rd highest rate utility in the state.
- The Christmas snowstorm that caused widespread outages ran close to 38K and we expect to receive from FEMA 80% of that cost back.

b. AMI – VPPSA Project - Advanced Meter Infrastructure. Most utilities put AMI in around 2009 -2012. VPPSA members chose not to move forward with the installation. The reason being the software and server had to be housed at the utility. Cost-wise for the hardware and technology was the driving factor for not installing them. As of today, the software is cloud based and the structure now developed would be housed at VPPSA vs at each utility.

If Barton Village were to sell the electric utility to another utility OUTSIDE of VPPSA, he does not recommend that the Village adopts the AMI due to the fact it will not be compatible with either VEC or GMPs systems. If we were to sell the utility to another VPPSA member, then the AMI systems would work as it is still in line with what VPPSA has for software and other technology.

Ken provided documents on a prior study done with Barton for AMI installation. The cost (Just for electric meters) would be \$343,038.94. This figure factors in the Barton portion of a 5-million-dollar grant that VPPSA received for the AMI project. A cost savings to the village of \$130,000 per year.

c. Utility Future [Brainstorming] - Retain or sell the utility. It was recommended to reach out to the previous consultants Patti & Chris so they could bring to the table what they had worked on previously regarding the pros and cons of selling or retaining.

E. Other Business:

One resident asked Ellis about how the Village is spending funds on village infrastructure. Ellis will invite the person to come to a meeting and discuss their concerns with the trustee board.

Discussion moved to which streets need paving and further conversation as to how it needs to be rolled out. Ellis would like to see the streets listed with a rating of good to worst to

determine what roads need paving over others. Another question came up about the sweeping of the streets. These questions will be asked of Andy Sicard.

EXECUTIVE SESSION ITEMS: -

- F. Personnel
- G. IBEW Contract
- H. Electric Dept Contract

Gina made a motion & Marilyn seconded to go into Executive session at 8:45PM with an invitation given to Ken Nolan to stay for the Electric department conversation.

Motion to find that premature general public knowledge of the Village's discussions and / or negotiations with IBEW personnel would place the Village in a position to suffer a substantial disadvantage because it would expose proposed contract negotiations.

Gina made a second motion also seconded by Marilyn to enter executive session to discuss personnel and labor relation contract negotiations as allowed under the provisions of Title 1, Section 313 (a) (3) and section 313 (a) (1) (B) of the Vermont Statutes.

- J. Adjourned at 9:50PM with no action taken.

Date of Next Regular Board Meeting: June 12th, 2023

Submitted by Regina (Gina) Lyon, Board Chair

Attested by Shelia Martin, Village Clerk