

Barton Village, Inc.
Regular Trustees Meeting

Monday, January 13, 2025

6:00 PM

Barton Village Memorial Hall

Attendance: Gina Lyon (Chair), Marilyn Prue (Trustee), Ellis Merchant (Trustee), Vera LaPort (BV Business Manager), Denis Fortin (Hydro Power Plant Manager), Patrick Hurley, (Memphremagog Watershed Association), Nathanel Johns (Vermont Housing Conversation) Kate Wolff (Barton Community Garden) Jacqueline Laurion (Clerk)

Agenda

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

- A. **Call to Order:** Gina Lyon called the meeting to order at 6:03pm
- B. **Changes to the Agenda/Additions or Deletions:** None
- C. **Privilege of the Floor:** None

ACTION ITEMS:

- D. **Minutes from the Regular Board of Trustees Meeting December 23, 2024** – Ellis Merchant made a motion to approve as presented. Marilyn Prue seconded the motion, the motion carried
- E. **Minutes from the Emergency Board of Trustees Meeting December 30, 2024** – Gina Lyon made a motion to approve as presented. Ellis Merchant seconded; the motion carried.
- F. **Bills and Warrants-** Marilyn Prue reviewed them during the meeting and was completed by end of meeting.
- G. **CY2025 Budgets** - Discussion had regarding budget changes and proposed changes.

Gina Lyon made a motion to approve the CY2025 Budgets as presented. Ellis Merchant seconded. Motion carried.

- H. **Property Lien for Electric Service:** The customer at 640 Maple Hill Road in Barton, VT has overdue electric charges in the amount of \$2,597.33 and should be liened to protect the utility's interest.
Gina Lyon made a motion to approve the property lien on 640 Maple Hill Road in Barton, VT for overdue electric service in the amount of \$2,597.33 as presented. Ellis Merchant seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- I. **Property Lien for Electric Service Discharge:** On August 15, 2023 a lien was placed on 2000 Cook Road in Westmore, VT for unpaid electric services. The balance has been paid and the account is in good standing. The owner has requested a lien discharge.
Gina Lyon made a motion to approve the property lien discharge for 2000 Cook Road in Westmore, VT as presented. Ellis Merchant seconded the motion. Motion carried.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Memphremagog Watershed Association Project Update: Patrick Hurley gave an update to the Trustees on the stormwater treatment project located at the corner of Church Street and Elm Street to the program's grantor, Nathanel Johns, as well as answering questions about the project.

Of note, The Solid Rock Assembly-God Church gave permissions for easement. The topic of knotweed removal came up with the use of a chemical stem injection method. Kate Wolff of The Barton Community Garden has a concern with the use of chemicals since they are an organic garden. The area impacted would be 50 x 10 area and it is yet to be determined how close to the growing gardens the knotweed removal would be. MWA has been given all the approvals necessary to start the project and the board has given permission to move forward with the grant process. The intent of MWA would be to wait until the growing season has ended in fall of 2025 so they are not impacting the very valuable organization to the Barton community's gardens. Final details to come in March of 2025. Still to be determined is the best way to remove the knotweed from the area that MWA will be working in.

This project was originally ranked as priority #6 out of 20 potential stormwater management projects identified, prioritized, and developed in the 2016 Memphremagog Stormwater Master Plan.

Barton Village is one of the most densely developed downtown areas in the Memphremagog Basin, and limited opportunities for stormwater management are available due to the built-out conditions and natural resource constraints (river corridor, floodplain, etc.).

This project is one of the few opportunities to utilize existing stormwater infrastructure and publicly owned, open lands to treat runoff. Without this project, the runoff from Barton Village will continue to discharge directly to Willoughby Brook, Barton River, and Lake Memphremagog without undergoing treatment.

The parcel is currently utilized by the Barton Community Gardens, a volunteer group that has coordinated with MWA throughout the development and design of this project.

They are aware of the temporary impacts to the gardens that are necessary to implement the work and appreciate the efforts MWA will take to restore the garden to pre-existing conditions. They will also work with the Village to mow the lawn and maintain a setback between the gardens and an infestation of Japanese knotweed in the Barton River floodplain.

The project aims to tap into an existing stormwater catch basin and divert runoff from ~6 acres of downtown Barton Village to treat the Water Quality event (1in, 24-hour storm). Treatment will be performed through a hydrodynamic separator unit followed by a combination infiltration trench/level spreader/vegetated filter strip & buffer.

Per conversations with Claire Madden & Ben Copans regarding the STP calculations and phosphorus removal efficiencies, this project will remove 3.1 kg/year.

The project will primarily be located on a parcel owned by the Village of Barton; however, a storm drainpipe will need to be routed through an abutting parcel owned by the Solid Rock Assembly of God church.

Annual Meeting Preparation: The Village's Annual Meeting is upon us and preparations should begin. The meeting is held on the second Tuesday of March, which will be March 11 this year.

Important dates:

- 01/30/2025 – (40 days before annual meeting) First date the meeting warning can be posted. Must be posted in at least two public places and the town clerk's office, as well as the website. 17 V.S.A. § 2641(a), (b)
- 02/28/2025 – (At least 10 days before annual meeting) Last date the annual report can be made available/distributed. 17 V.S.A. § 2641(b)
- 03/05/2025 – (At least 5 days before annual meeting) Warning must be published in the Chronicle. 17 V.S.A. § 2641(b)
- 03/11/2025 – Annual meeting.

- J. **Hydro Facility Upgrade Update:** Denis Fortin spoke to the board to give them an update on the Hydro project: The only item remaining to complete the backup generator project is physically connecting the gas line to the generator. Fred's Energy will complete the connection the week of 01/13/2025.

Penstock #2 has unfortunately sprung another leak and Operator Denis Fortin has been unable to get a patch to hold. If ice buildup becomes an issue, he may need to dig a trench to the river for the water to flow.

- K. **Flood Update:** Of note:

- 01/06/2025 – Non-federal share of DR4720 in the amount of \$40,259.78 currently being processed by the State and should be received in 2-3 weeks. This is mostly for Highway, but all other departments will see some reimbursement as well.
- 01/10/2025 – Follow-up meeting with VEM and FEMA. Disaster Inventory currently being organized into projects by FEMA staff, but are awaiting results of the site inspection before finalizing. The Disaster Inventory will be "locked in" on 02/11/2025.

Buyouts

- 12/31/2024 – Buyouts for 90 Glover Road and 29 Elm Street approved by FEMA. Property owners have been informed. There is nothing more for them to do until an assessor reaches out to them to begin the process.
- 01/16/2025 – Buyout "kickoff" meeting with VEM and FEMA. No property owners will be present. A meeting with the municipality, property owners, VEM, and FEMA will take place once the assessment process begins.
- No new structures may be built on the properties except:
 - Public buildings that are open on all sides and functionally related to a designated open space or recreational use.

- Public restrooms.
- Structures that are compatible with open space, recreational or wetlands management use and applicable floodplain management policies and practices, and for which compatibility is confirmed in writing by the FEMA regional administrator before construction of the structures begins.
- Structures described in the above three bullets that will be elevated or floodproofed to the Base Flood Elevation plus one foot of freeboard and that meet the applicable requirements of National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) floodplain management regulations.

L. Department Operations Update:

Electric Department

- Tariff rider – Under review with PUC.
- Disconnection notices – Under review with PUC.
- VPPSA – Looking into hiring temps to assist with staffing shortages in finance and regulatory. Every electric utility in the state is currently pursuing rate cases, and the turnover in the Department of Public Service is predicted to cause delays.
- On-call service – We are now active with New England Call Center. There will be no difference in process to the customer, except hopefully better service.
- Broadband – Grattan Line Construction continues to work on NEK Broadband make-ready.
- Hydro – The hydro facility produced 6,928 MWH in 2024, increased from 6,338 MWH in 2023. The hydro facility will also now be keeping its renewable energy credits (RECs) to satisfy the State’s Tier II REC requirements.

Wastewater Department

- Glover Agreement – Sampling began on 12/04/2024 and will continue monthly for the foreseeable future. More direct sampling may need to occur to further establish each municipality’s contribution to BOD levels.
- Upgrade project – The Village’s portion of the USDA grant application is complete and under review by Mike Mainer at Aldritch + Elliott. The application deadline is 01/16/2025.
- Disconnection notices -
- The wastewater treatment facility continues to operate well and all reporting deadlines are being met.

Water Department

- NOAV dated 11/08/2024 – The state has approved the following plan to remediate disinfection byproduct levels:
 - Late spring/early summer 2025 – Dredging to remove sediment that was deposited during the flooding of 2023 and 2024.
 - Following the dredging, four quarters worth of monitoring will be allowed to take place to better understand the impacts of dredging based on annual average at the sample collection sites.
 - Should elevated thihalomethanes (TTHMs) persist during the period prior to dredging, Water Operator Lucas DiMauro will reach out to the State to

determine additional short-term actions that may be taken to immediately reduce TTHM levels.

- Water sampling – Results from the well water and blended surface water samples have not yet been received.
- Fairview Estates – The engineer for Fairview Estates' water line project has reached out with design plans for review. DPW Foreman Andy Sicard, Water Operator Lucas DiMauro and Business Manager Vera LaPorte will meet to review and discuss once plans are received.
- The water treatment facility continues to operate well and all reporting deadlines are being met.

Highway Department

- Grant applications – HSIP and Grants-in-Aid reimbursements have been submitted. Eastern Avenue culvert is ineligible for the Better Roads program due to being a part of the Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP). It may apply for 2025 Grants-in-Aid (all MRGP roads).
- Salt/sand shed – The Request for Proposal (RFP) is currently under review with the USDA.

Village Department

- Senior Accountant/HR Administrator Amy Braun's last day with the Village was 01/10/2025. The position is currently being advertised on Indeed, VLCT, the Chronicle, Newport Daily Express, and on the Village website.

OTHER ITEMS:

M. Other Business:

- Amy Braun has offered to assist with a few Villages financial tasks until her replacement is hired. Gina Lyon made a motion to accept and approve the proposal presented to the Trustees and Marilyn Prue seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- 2025 Pageant Park contracts will be sent to the trustees for review ahead of the 2025 Seasonal camping season.
- School Crossing signs have still not arrived, and Vera LaPorte will reach out to get an ETA from the vendor.
- Cell phone for BV staff; A policy needs to be created regarding the phone from First Net. These phones are equipped to work in the event of emergencies such as power outage and cell tower outages. This will ensure the crew is able to be reached when emergencies occur.
- Sweatshirt design for Village Barton Crew still in progress
- Scheduling of Hall has been reviewed with all current parties involved. (folks that rent the hall regularly)
- Staff reviews are ready for review by Trustees.
- New office phone has arrived to the Village office for the new financial position that is open.

EXECUTIVE SESSION ITEMS:

- N. Executive Session - Personnel: 1 V.S.A. § 313 (a)(3) – Gina Lyon made a motion to go into executive session at 8:03PM

At 8:43pm the Board came out of Executive Session. Gina Lyon made a motion to approve 3.2 % COL increases to four non-IBEW employees. Ellis Merchant seconded the motion. Motion carried.

- O. Adjourn – Gina Lyon made motion to adjourn at 8:44pm. Marilyn Prue seconded. Motion carried.

Upcoming Meetings:

Regular Board Meeting: 01/27/2025

Regular Board Meeting: 02/10/2025