

**TOWN OF BARRE**  
**SPECIAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES**  
**April 25, 2023**  
**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS**

Pursuant to the foregoing warrant 137 of the 4,079 qualified voters (78 from Prec. 1 and 59 from Prec. 2) gathered at the Ruggles Lane School, 105 Ruggles Lane in Barre, to act on the Articles in said warrant. A total of 13 guests (non-voters) were also in attendance. A quorum of 50 voters or more were present at all times.

Moderator Joshua Smith called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m. with a total 136 voters in attendance. The Moderator opened the meeting by welcoming everyone, and introducing newly hired Attorney Matt Sirigu, from K.P. Law, Barre's new Town Counsel and followed with a pledge of allegiance to the Flag. He then announced that everyone should have received a copy of the Finance Committee's Booklet with warrant articles to be acted upon with recommendations, upon checking in. He then proceeded with the following motions which were all favorably voted by the Selectmen and Finance Committee, duly seconded and voted unanimously:

**MODERATOR' S MOTIONS**

**MOTION 1**

On a motion made and duly seconded it was **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** to approve that this meeting dispense with the reading of the warrant and of the Constable's return of service of that warrant and that the Moderator not be required to read warrant articles verbatim, but may refer to them by number and/or subject matter.

**MOTION 2**

On a motion made and duly seconded it was **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** to approve that the moderator may extend the floor to Town management and staff and other non-voters provided that they must first be recognized by the Moderator.

**MOTION 3**

On a motion made and duly seconded it was **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** to approve that the Moderator, pursuant to G.L. c. 39 § 15, be allowed to declare a two-thirds vote rather than taking a standing count.

The meeting continued as follows:

**Art. 1 Discussion:**

*Former Senator, Stephen M. Brewer, spoke in favor of the article stating that Barre Savings Foundation may be able to donate \$25,000 towards the event and there is also state funding available for possibly another \$25,000 so that could potentially offset the cost by \$50,000.*

*Hillary Boudreau from the 250<sup>th</sup> Committee also spoke in favor of the article stating the committee will continue to raise money through various events.*

**Article 1**  
**250TH ANNIVERSARY**  
**Sponsor: 250th Committee**  
***[Majority Vote Required]***

On a motion made by Richard Stevens and duly seconded it was **unanimously voted by voice vote to transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$100,000** to cover expenses incurred by the 250<sup>th</sup> celebration committee, said amount to be offset by receipt of State and private charitable trust funds.

Recommendation of the Select Board: Favorable

Recommendation of the Finance Committee: Favorable

**Art. 2 Discussion:**

*In response to a question raised on Article 2 as to what the consultant was for it was stated that Article 2 was for the pay incurred for the hired interim treasurer/collector consultant position prior to hiring the current treasurer/collector.*

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**ARTICLE 2**  
**MASS MUNIFIN CONSULTING SERVICES**

**Sponsor: Select Board**  
*[Majority Vote Required]*

On a motion made by Select Board Chair, Maureen Marshall and duly seconded it was **voted by a Majority Affirmative Voice Vote to transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$39,611.26** to pay for consulting services for the Treasurer/Collector's Office.

Recommendation of the Select Board: Favorable

Recommendation of the Finance Committee: Favorable

**Article 3**  
**CAPITAL REQUEST - Purchase & Equip a New Ambulance**  
**Sponsor: Fire Department**  
*[Two-Thirds Vote Required]*

**A motion was made and seconded** to amend the vote taken under Article 17 of the June 14, 2022 Annual Town Meeting that provided the Town to raise and appropriate, borrow, or transfer the sum of \$305,000 to purchase and equip a new ambulance, and to further authorize the Select Board to enter into a lease purchase financing agreement in accordance with the provisions of G. L. c. 44, §21C for a period of up to five years for said purchase and to use such appropriation as the funding source for this purchase, and provided, however, that any vote taken under said Article 17, as amended hereunder shall be subject to and contingent upon an affirmative vote of the Town at an election to exempt from the limitations on taxes imposed by G.L. c. 59, §21C, so-called Proposition 2 ½, the Town's allocable share of the amounts required for the payment of interest and principal on said lease purchase.

**Discussion:**

*In response to a question as to whether or not this article is subject to a debt exclusion, it was stated no, this is a lease/borrow/purchase agreement for a 5 year term to come out of the Town budget.*

*Dan Jewell, Finance Committee Chairman, stated in June 2022 we voted for a 7 year now changing for 2023 for a 5 year which will be a high dollar amount per year for lease/purchase agreement and 5 years will be a challenge. By staying within 2 ½ levy limit taxes will not increase and it would be approximately \$65,000/yr and we will end up with less Free Cash. At the Annual Town Meeting in June 2022 we approved \$365,000, this amount is being amended to \$305,000.*

*Town Counsel stated that the funding source was already determined and this is just a vote to authorize the town to enter into a lease agreement.*

*Cheryl Southwick stated being on a fixed income she was concerned it would affect her taxes. Thomas Tuttle asked why we needed the new ambulance. In response, the Ambulance is needed to replace the 2016 Ambulance which is in constant repair and has over 128,000 miles.*

*Several other questions such as how this will affect the FY23/FY24 budgets, are we adding or replacing a truck, do we have a signed contract, who owns the ambulance at the end of 5 years. It was stated we are replacing a truck and the town will own it once the lease is complete. No contract has been approved to borrow at this time and a lease option is the better way to go. There would most likely be no affect on budget until FY25.*

*As clarified that this article was previously voted at last years Town Meeting and the purpose for bringing it back to town meeting was only to correct the wording to allow for a lease/purchase agreement as a source of funding and not whether or not to purchase the vehicle or change the amount, an amendment of the main motion was requested.*

**A second motion** was made, seconded and voted **unanimously to amend the first motion by striking out the words "that provided the Town to raise and appropriate, borrow, or transfer the sum of \$305,000" and to add a period after the word purchase and strike the remainder of the motion "and provided, however, that any vote taken under said Article 17, as amended hereunder shall be subject to and contingent upon an affirmative vote of the Town at an election to exempt from the limitations on taxes imposed by G.L. c. 59, §21C, so-called Proposition 2 ½, the Town's allocable share of the amounts required for the payment of interest and principal on said lease purchase.**

**TOWN OF BARRE**  
**SPECIAL TOWN MEETING Minutes Cont.**  
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**Article 3**  
**CAPITAL REQUEST - Purchase & Equip a New Ambulance**  
**Sponsor: Fire Department**  
**[Two-Thirds Vote Required]**

On a motion made by Select Board Chair, Maureen Marshall and duly seconded it was **voted unanimously to pass the main motion as amended: VOTED UNANIMOUSLY:** To amend the vote taken under Article 17 of the June 14, 2022 Annual Town Meeting to purchase and equip a new ambulance, and to further authorize the Select Board to enter into a lease purchase financing agreement in accordance with the provisions of G. L. c. 44, §21C for a period of up to five years for said purchase and to use such appropriation as the funding source for this purchase.

Recommendation of the Select Board: FAVORABLE

Recommendation of the Finance Committee: FAVORABLE

**Art. 4 Discussion:**

*Town Counsel responded the 7year lease was permitted and that rotation of 5year lease allowed from Attorney General is for general contracted work not for useful life of equipment. In response to why we needed a new fire truck, will it fit in the station, how many engines do we have, if it doesn't pass what is the alternative, do we have bond rating – it was stated the #5 Fire Truck is a 1990 and parts were obsolete and hard to obtain and it will fit in South Barre Station. We currently have 1 engine tanker and 3 engines in Barre. If the article didn't pass we would run old engine until it quit and the cost of new one will continue to rise. Select Board Chair, Maureen Marshall stated we do not have a bond rating, it takes 3 years of clean audits for a bond rating and that the agreement with the company was to build a new fire truck. If we walk away, we will be responsible to pay a portion of the truck and not have a fire truck. The truck is currently being constructed because we already voted last year to approve the truck.*

*Dan Jewell, Fin. Com. Chair, state in 2022 the FINCOM was not in favor but town approved the truck anyway. The town can not afford to put this in the operating budget. Debt exclusion is not an option but a lease/purchase is. They do agree the town has a need for the truck but not sure we can afford without borrowing and made a motion to recommended striking lease/purchase agreement and adding authorized borrowing which was seconded and defeated by a majority vote.*

*Town Counsel suggested passing over Article if town meeting chooses to borrow because we already have approval to borrow from 2022 ATM. This article is only on the warrant to authorize town to lease/purchase the truck.*

*DPW Superintendent, Jason Pimental stated the truck was already approved and is being built now. The lease purchase agreement is less per month. If we back out now, 80% of the truck will need to be paid and we will not get the truck.*

*No amendments were approved.*

**Article 4**  
**CAPITAL REQUEST -Purchase & Equip a New Fire Truck**  
**Sponsor: Fire Department**  
**[Two-Thirds Vote Required]**

On a motion made Select Board Chair, Maureen Marshall and duly seconded **it was voted by a declared more than 2/3<sup>rd</sup> Majority Voice Vote** to amend the vote taken under Article 18 of the June 14, 2022 Annual Town Meeting to purchase and equip a new fire truck, and to further authorize the Select Board to enter into a lease purchase financing agreement in accordance with the provisions of G. L. c. 44, §21C for a period of up to 7 years for said purchase.

**Recommendation of the Select Board: FAVORABLE**

**Recommendation of the Finance Committee: UN-FAVORABLE**

On a motion made and duly seconded it was unanimously voted to dissolve the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

*Ellen M. Glidden*

Ellen M. Glidden, CMC, CMMC  
Barre Town Clerk