

# City of Barre Public Body Meeting Minutes

Committee: Transportation and Public Works

Date: March 20, 2025

Location: City Council chambers

Members in attendance: Steve Mackenzie, Art Bombardier, Mitch Bernard, Ken Bauer

Members absent: none

Others in attendance: Department of Public Works director Brian Baker

## Call to order

Steve called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

## Adjustments to the agenda

None.

## Public comment

No public in attendance to comment.

## Approval of the previous meeting's minutes

Mitch moved to approve the minutes of the February 20, 2025, meeting. Art seconded the motion. All voted to approve. Minutes were approved.

## Agenda items

The committee continued down the list of items it began last week.

First was discussion of speed bumps installed in residential areas. Brian doesn't think they really slow traffic down and noted that they get in the plows' way. However, he added later that the department would, of course, install whatever bumps the council requested.

Ken noted that there's a group that meets to discuss traffic calming on Route 14, and he's been attending. Participants are concerned about traffic going through, especially Thursday nights with [Thunder Road](#) there.

Steve mentioned being on [Warren Street](#) one evening recently around 9:30 or 10 and someone just blew through the stop sign.

Brian said that the department does have some portable plastic bumps already. Jesse Rosado, among others, was a proponent of speed bumps on [Merchant Street](#), but those were eliminated after paving. Brian said that the department plans to put those in this year.

Steve agreed that they're not very effective.

Brian had complaints from people on Merchant Street because of noise—he said that drivers slow way down for the bumps then speed way up. This was true, he said, with [speed tables](#), [speed humps](#), and speed bumps (some use the same term for bumps and humps, but others say there are differences in grade and height between bumps and humps).

Art asked about the road by [Vanasse Hangen Brustlin \(VHB\)](#). Brian said that the department will [narrow the intersection](#) and [eliminate the wide radiuses](#) that people speed through. On [Berlin Street](#), a sidewalk was washed away. The department is going to put new sidewalk on the inside of the curb to narrow the street a little, then adjust radiuses.

The department will also be moving a speed sign to below Bailey so drivers see that before getting to the intersection. This is before the straightaway leading to Berlin.

Ken said that wants something to slow the trucks down. Speed tables would, though not as much as speed bumps. Brian said that the department would probably pull those up for winter plowing. Steve noted that the department should watch for complaints about noise.

Ken also said that people were asking for a crosswalk at [Wellington Street](#). Would it be too close to the hill? Brian said that he would have to look into it. Ken said that there's no sidewalk on the one side, so people have to cross and speeders come up the hill. Steve says that Bill Ahearn had reservations about some changes because of visibility coming up the hill.

Ken said that they needed at least painted crosswalks; Brian noted that code requires having a landing on each side. Brian said that he would look at it when the department goes out to paint this spring.

The rest of the items on the list, items B through E, are items believed to be added by Samn Stockwell, and members agreed that it would be best to wait to discuss them until she could be with us.

Art moved to table those until Samn can be here. Mitch seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Brian also indicated that staffing was challenging. They were hiring people with no qualifications. Right now, he has one position in streets, he said, but no other vacancies.

## New agenda items

### Committee membership

Art and Steve's terms are expiring terms. Both said that they would run again.

Mitch will be stepping down this June.

Nicolas will be emailing members to find out what their intentions are.

Steve noted that it would be best to have at least five, and an odd number, of members. The committee is currently short one member and will be short two when Mitch leaves. Steve urged attendees to think about whom they might know who might be interested. He noted that council always wants to know whether a candidate has attended a meeting, so if a potential candidate is identified, they should be encouraged to attend a committee meeting, whether in person or via Zoom. Candidates can fill out the [application on the city's website](#) and contact Steve.

### Brian's report

With spring coming fast, sweepers started Sunday night and got the downtown sidewalks, which are in better shape this year than in past years because the department has switched to straight salt rather than mixing it. Of course, the city blew the salt budget out of the water. It was set at \$160,000 and the department spent \$190,000. Steve noted that that isn't bad.

The city is still under for the street budget, though. Brian said that the department would fill the shed at current prices for next year.

A sweeper is out every day. One guy was looking for overtime, so he was going out that evening. If there's too much rain, they can't go out, but otherwise they're trying to keep on top of it. A little rain can even help.

The department has patched a sewer-collapse hole. A manhole had been paved over, so it had to be cut open to line it. Flows have been too high to do so before now.

Art noted an exposed sewer pipe in Wildersburg, The city has a [Federal Emergency Management Agency \(FEMA\)](#) damage claim in.

The department has been very happy with the paving company from Massachusetts.

There's a nonworking drain that's backed up that the department couldn't fix in December because it was too cold. They have to fix that drain, line the rest of that sewer, then apply concrete to the road, then pave. They are waiting for spring flows to go down in a few weeks.

Brian said that the cost is the same for cold patch (about \$2,000), which is all temporary, so he is trying to rethink things for next year's repair and paving. He also discussed methods and equipment for these processes, including [hot boxes](#). The department might use that this year if it works as well as it seems to be so far. They could do that every couple of weeks to keep up with the holes.

Brian noted that the far end of [Smith](#) is really bad and they're going to work on that. There's also a huge pothole at [Maple and Seminary](#), and [Seminary from Brook](#) is still kind of ratty. Art noted a couple of 2'-diameter holes right together.

In addition to patching holes, the department replaced four hydrants in March. They've concentrated on Prospect for paving projects this year.

Also they'll be eliminating the sidewalk opposite the [Old Labor Hall](#) on [Granite Street](#), from the railroad track to the hall.

They will be paving Merchants' Row this spring. Current project is upper Berlin Street from John to Highgate, then rebuilds from Highgate to Prospect, then from Jake past Allen, then Allen from Prospect to the city line. Most of this will be rebuild. As long as prices are decent, the department will have enough money. Last year, [Blaktop](#) was \$106/ton and is very good.

Ken asked how much does a ton pave on a standard street. Brian said he would look it up. The department puts down 4 inches in streets and 3 inches in parking lots. They have two lifts of type 3 and type 4.

Sweepers will be out soon. The budget survey showed that people were most concerned about sidewalk conditions. The department hadn't done any sidewalk maintenance in the past two seasons because of flooding. So they are doing Granite Street first. (Complaints weren't broken down by location.)

Steve asked about the department garage. Brian said that there was a planning meeting last night and have alternative-use determination (AUD) approval in Barre Town. Still have [Act 250](#) submittals to get approved. They are buying O'Reilly's building, keeping the same tax base because they're paying municipal and school taxes. There was only one no vote.

Steve asked about salt storage in the new location. Brian said that the department was planning a covered concrete bunker. He also said that the plow routes might change because they have a new starting point.

## Round table

Art asked whether the committee could have a round table on its agenda. Steve will add it to future agendas.

Art noted the Route 302 guard rail at Berlin City line on the right going to Montpelier on the west end. Coming into town, the rail needs a G-1D on it. At 40 mph, a G-1D is standard, but the rail should be extended at least 50' from the angle of approach. It is currently behind the rail and not G-1D. (G-1D is a 16.5° curve.) They should also be sure to cover the telephone pole and guide wires. He said that they can probably get that through [class 1 road funding](#).

Brian put this on his list.

## Minutes

Mitch proposed a new process for minutes: (1) The secretary sends a draft, marked clearly as a draft and with Track Changes on and locked, to Roxanne and the committee members by close of business (COB) Friday (the day after the meeting), and Roxanne posts this draft. (2) Members have until COB Monday to send revisions to the secretary. (3) The secretary has until COB Tuesday to send the final minutes to Roxanne and the committee. Roxanne posts the final. Members were amenable, so this is the process for now.

## Next meeting

The committee will meet next on April 24 at 5:00 p.m. in City Council chambers.

# Adjournment

Art moved to adjourn at 5:46 p.m. Ken seconded. Vote was unanimous to adjourn.

Mitch Bernard filed the draft minutes Friday at 10:15 a.m.