

## **TOWN OF CHARLEMONT SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

**Small Town Summit**, Thursday, December 1, 2016, 7:00pm

Hawlemont Regional Elementary School, Charlemont, MA

**Attendees:** Beth Bandy and Sarah Reynolds (Charlemont Select Board); Sheila Litchfield (Heath Select Board); Diane Bushee (Goshen Select Board and Board of Assessors); Trevor Mackie (Charlemont Broadband Committee); Cheryl Handsaker (Charlemont Broadband Committee and Agricultural Commission); John Sears, Robert MacLean, and Hussain Hamdan (Hawley Select Board); Chris Lynch (Matrix, Director of Business Development); Jim Drawe (WiredWest Chair); Darlene McVeigh (Huntington Finance Committee Chair); Bob Dean (Franklin Regional Council of Governments, Director of Regional Services); Trevor D. McDaniel (Deerfield Select Board); Marilyn Wilson (Rowe Select Board); Joe Kearns (Middlefield Finance Committee Chair); Jessie Cooley (Legislative Aide to Representative Paul Mark); and Diane Broncaccio (reporter for The Recorder).

Beth Bandy called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. The purpose of this Small Town Summit, hosted by the Charlemont Select Board, was to prepare a list of legislative priorities to take to the Western Massachusetts Legislative Summit on December 3, 2016.

The legislative priorities developed at this meeting were as follows:

### **Impact of Legislation on Small Towns**

- Support legislation that requires bills to be reviewed for impact on small towns (under 7000 people) and changed to be equitable for these communities

### **Broadband**

- Eliminate MBI as “middle man”; State should make direct grants to towns for last-mile build-out
- Provide additional funding (\$10M) to finish last mile build-out in small towns of western MA
- Address disparity in per-household funding provided to cable companies (\$3600) for last mile build-out, versus that provided to towns (\$1400)
- Provide low-income subsidies for internet access in rural communities

### **Rural Schools**

- Support Rural Schools bill coming up in 2017
- Continue push for full regional school district transportation reimbursement
- Support special legislation that will allow regional school district towns make regional agreement changes
- Provide building redevelopment funds for Towns that have closed school buildings
- Prohibit all public funding for charter schools

## **Open Meeting Law**

- Current requirements around discussion among a quorum make running small towns (where boards may only have three people) difficult; also impedes ability to orient new board members

## **PILOT Programs**

- Low or non-existent PILOT payments are a critical financial issue for small towns in western MA, some of which have more than 50% of land that is tax-exempt, state owned or in Chapter (examples: Hawley, Goshen, Colrain)
- Small Town Summit attendees had many ideas about how to correct this situation, including a circuit breaker/ graduated tax rate model

## **ZIP Codes**

- Financial implications for towns and businesses located in towns without dedicated ZIP Codes ZIPs cross town lines (example: meals taxes collected in Buckland restaurants going to Shelburne, because they share one Shelburne Falls ZIP)

## **Support pending legislation**

- S.2294 - a bill that would allow small town/ volunteer ambulance services staff calls with one EMT and one First Responder
- H.4700 - Charlemont recreation tax

The group agreed that the next Small Town Summit should focus on drafting bills for the legislative priorities listed above. The date for that meeting will be set by the Charlemont Select Board.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50pm.