

Minutes of the Charlemont Selectboard April 16,2026

6 pm Superintendents Conference Room Mohawk High School

Members' Present: Wilder Sparks, Kim Blakeslee

Mohawk Budget Subcommittee members present: Martha Thurber, William Lataille, Sheryl Stanton, Willow Cohen, Evie Locke, and Keith Patenaude.

Others Present; Ashly Sparks and Anne Kaplan Hawlemont School committee, Amy Wales, Bob Handsaker and Sarah Reynolds.

The Board discussed an enrollment assessment error originating in 2020 that impacts five years of financial data. The issue stems from the use of rolling five-year assessment numbers tied to enrollment figures. Enrollment is certified annually in October, with additional real-time updates reported in January and June through the SIMS reporting system from DESE. The error was not related to zip codes, and the error was with the Mohawk Trail Assessment not the Hawlemont one. Due to the certification process of the School Budget the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) stated the school cannot fix the error because the years in question are closed.

It was noted that, following discovery of the error, two verification checks with town clerks have since been implemented to certify enrollment numbers. None of the current individuals involved in the verification process were responsible for the original error, and the exact cause remains unknown. William Lataille discussed how the budget numbers are done each year and what current systems are in place.

Discussion included potential remedies. Wilder Sparks shared a suggestion, based on guidance from Finance Committee member Jay Healy, to approach the State for relief. Wilder expressed the importance of having the schools' support in explaining the error and how the numbers were calculated. One option discussed was pursuing an earmark that would allow the towns of Charlemont and Hawley to address the funding shortfall without requiring other towns to return previously underspent funds. The Committee agreed to attend a meeting with Paul Mark to discuss it.

Motion:

A motion was made by Kim Blakeslee and seconded by Wilder Sparks to proceed with discussing the logistical steps and to move forward with contacting Senator Paul Mark.

The Board agreed to support preparing and submitting the necessary documentation outlining the error and detailing how the enrollment numbers were calculated.

The Meeting was adjourned at 7pm.