

CHARLEMONT SELECTBOARD

MEETING MINUTES

Monday, December 16, 2024, 6:00 pm

in person and via conference call, Town Hall, 157 Main Street, Charlemont MA

Members in attendance: Kim Blakeslee, Valentine Reid, Jay Healy, Amy Wales

On phone: Jared Bellows, Lynn Hathaway

Others in attendance: Sarah Reynolds, Star Atkeson, Martha Therber

Appointments: 6:30 Pm - Finance Committee

To discuss and Vote on New Ambulance Invoice and Town Hall

The ambulance invoice came with a change order. \$5,354 not covered by the warrant article. There is a USDA grant that could go towards the ambulance: 122,000 can take care of the five thousand and the remainder can go into Free Cash or The General Fund. The current stretcher is good for the new ambulance.

Valentine Reid motioned to request a \$5354. transfer from the Reserve Fund to pay for this. Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. All in favor, Jared Bellows-Aye.

Amy Wales motioned to approve the \$5354 reserve fund transfer for the ambulance. Jay Healy seconded it. All in Favor, Lynn Hathaway, Aye.

To discuss and Vote on Flooring project accounting

There is \$12,500 okayed in a warrant article to replace the flooring in the 3 offices in Town Hall. The quote from Booska is \$4239.20 more than the amount in the warrant. The Select Board would like to ask Finance if they could cover the difference with money from the Reserve Fund.

Kim Blakeslee made a motion to create a nicer working environment for Town Staff and to avoid a special Town Meeting by requesting a reserve fund transfer of \$4239.20 to go towards Town Hall Flooring.

Valentine Reid seconded the motion. All in Favor. Jared Bellows –Aye.

Amy Wales made a motion that the Finance Committee approves a \$4239.20 reserve fund transfer to Town Hall Flooring. Jay Healy seconded the motion. All in favor, Lynn Hathaway –Aye.

As Martha Therber was present, Val suggested taking the agenda out of order:

Agenda items:

1) FY25 Budget Earmark from Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for \$25,000 to supplement Sustainability Study Discuss and Approve/Sign paperwork

Martha Therber reported that Natalie Blais asked the School Committee to try and get an earmark for \$25,000 to cover the remaining cost for the sustainability study that Berk 12 is doing. The cost was 283,000., Berk12 brought it down to 275,000. There was previously a grant from the State which covered 250,000. of it.

Valentine Reid motioned to approve and sign the FY25 DESE \$25,000 earmark to supplement the cost of the sustainability study. Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. All in favor, Jared Bellows –Aye.

Sarah will do it online.

Administrator Report:

1) Legate Hill Bridge Small Bridge Grant Application

Last year's engineering stage was approved. At the beginning of this year Sarah will file for a \$500,000 replacement grant

2) Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness 2.0 Grant Application update

. To update the MVP plan (big black book, what to do in an emergency) Sarah will submit with Colrain, they will meet with the provided consultant at the same time, there is an extended timeline and it culminates in a seed grant for \$50,000 to start one of the action items in the plan.

3) Open Space and Recreation Plan Status update

It is in rough draft form. Sarah is asking for comments and corrections by January 13th, hoping to get the final draft by the 27th in time for February grant cycle. It's 117 pages, the sections with the most changes are the land statistics and population. Cheryl Handsaker and Sarah Dorsey did a lot of work on it. When it is done, the Select Board suggested sending out thank you notes. Some of the updates can be used to inform the Master Plan update.

4) Town Priority projects request from FRCOG Bob Dean, as part of an updated funding advocacy for grants.

- There was an email ask from Bob Dean about what projects in Charlemont could use help funding.
- The Healy Act of 2024 is a federal grant to provide matching funds
- New Fire and Ambulance facility and Town hall elevator remained from the original list,
- there is a USDA community facilities grant that could go towards these but it requires matching funds.
- The feasibility study for the elevator with the layout and cost has been done. The museum could be potentially moved to the fairgrounds and the library moved upstairs, then the town staff could move out of the meeting room
- Kim Blakslee suggested a project to double the sewer capacity to bring more businesses to town, and she is not opposed to the elevator. Sarah will add that to the list.
- 1) New General services Facility (emergency plus HWY,) 2) adding to Sewer capacity, 3)Town Hall Elevator project.
- Val suggested putting the Rail bridge on Charlemont's list. It is on the bridge list. There is grant money for rail infrastructure.
- Kim suggested a new turnaround spot for the FRTA bus, since Avery's isn't being used. Sarah suggested Shunpike. Val suggested creating a line item for Public Transportation Infrastructure improvements.

5) Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority quarterly Report on Charlemont Activities.

The Board viewed the updated quarterly report. \$46,810.00 worth of projects are happening in Charlemont.

Liaison Reports:

1) Highway Full Time Employee starting salary question and vote.

The Board discussed the HWY super's request for a raise for Brandon Root. He has become fulltime and has since gotten multiple licenses. Jared recommended the Board come up with a pay scale across the board. The board discussed HWY's staffing.

Val suggests creating and using a pay scale and performance reviews to determine salary. Kim suggested being competitive with pay.

Valentine Reid motioned to, as per Scott Sullivan's recommendation, set Brandon's pay at \$23 an hour and commit to further refining Charlemont's HR processes. Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. All in Favor. Jared Bellows –Aye.

2) Franklin Regional Transit Authority Meeting Report

- Kim attended the FRTA all boards meeting on Nov 21, 2024.
- There will be more busses on Saturdays and Sundays.
- Kim suggested having a link to the FRTA bus schedule on the Town's website. It is not on the bus stop. Sarah will do that.
- Kim updated the board with some other goings-on at FRTA.
- There is a 1.3 mil grant to provide bus service from Greenfield to North Adams and a stop in Charlemont was asked about. FRTA does not plan to use the Route 2 corridor for that service. The Select Board was surprised by this as many 18-wheeler make it around the hair pin turn there, and it is the preferred route for many

reasons. Additionally, it would add 20 minutes on to the commute time. Again, they have not recognized Shunpike as a turnaround. The Fire Station is another option for a turnaround.

- Michael Perrault followed up with Kim, that the commuter bus to North Adams would make 4 trips a day, stop in Charlemont at the Park and Ride and determined that Route 2 wasn't feasible for a year-round motor coach. He does want to talk further while it is in draft form.
- Vale supports the idea of writing a letter that the SB recommend FRTA take insight from the local knowledge of roads. They are large busses, and it will be a very small ridership, going back and forth 4 times a day. It would be poorly planned out without using local knowledge. Sarah questioned what the cost of the route would be after the grant ran out. She added that Mohawk state park is a hiking destination which would increase ridership especially in the summer and would help ease the traffic burden in Charlemont. They suggest that FRTA coordinate with DOT. Shunpike is a rest. stop and people are allowed to be there. Sarah can talk to Francesca. If they do not take route 2 there are also losing the chance to serve Monroe and Florida, two communities in Franklin County.
- **Valentine Reid motioned to authorize Kim Blakeslee write a letter on behalf of the Select Board in the spirit of this conversation urging FRTA not to go south with the route. Jared Bellows seconded the motion. All in Favor. Jared Bellows—Aye.**

3) Board of Health discussion on properties for the Abandoned and Derelict Properties Work

Kim went over in detail and with updates and informational discrepancies about specific properties. There were problems with issuing and following up with condemnation orders to banks or to new owners. Val thinks that when a property is sold, the new owner should be notified that it is condemned. There is another meeting on the 19th after the new year.

The communication was positive, there was some movement. The Select Board would like to set up a meeting with the Select Board and the Board of Health.

4) Boston Center For Equalities DEI offer of consulting services.

Kim is curious about the services they provide. Sarah confirmed that there is a cost as it is a consulting service. Kim is looking for Charlemont to become more diversity and equity minded with projects, like having gender neutral bathrooms at the Fairgrounds. She wonders how else they support towns in this regard. Sarah said that as of yet there is no funding for that.

Agenda items:

2) Curb Cut for 225 Avery Brook Road

Scott has one more follow up question for the owner and will be ready next week. **Valentine Reid motioned to sign the curb cut application for 225 Avery Brook Road pending the signing of police, Fire, and HWY department heads. Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. All in favor Jared Bellows –Aye**

3) Transfer Station Inspection paperwork review and approve/sign.

Same as previous year's:

Valentine Reid made a motion to approve and sign the Transfer Station's inspection. Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. All in Favor. Jared Bellows –Aye

**The alternate employee was removed from the payroll. They will ask the HWY guys if anyone wants to be an alternate. Sarah will put the call out to HWY.

4) Christmas Gift Cards for employees.

Valentine Reid motioned to authorize Sarah to give \$25. gift cards to fulltime employees from local businesses excluding the sale of alcohol. Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. All in favor, Jared Bellows –Aye.

Approve and Sign Annual Alcohol Licenses, Class II, and Class III licenses:

Alcohol Licenses:

1) AL Avery GS LLC – 127 Main Street 2) Berkshire East Ski Resort LLC – 66 Thunder Mountain Road 3) Berkshire Pizzeria LLC – 72 Main Street 4) Crab Apple Whitewater Inc- 2056 Mohawk Trail 5) Cold River Inc- 31 Main Street

6) Dirt Church- Haven of the East Holdings – 31 Main Street 7) Sonivya Inc- 151 Main Street 8) ~~133 Warfield LLC- 200 Warfield Road~~

There are no complaints, objections or holds. 133 Warfield is not doing it.

Valentine Reid motioned to approve alcohol licenses as listed in our meeting agenda 1-7. Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. All in favor. Jared Bellows –Aye.

Class II and III: 1) Matts Automotive- 56 Main Street 2) Rae Leasing LLC – 2231 Mohawk Trail 3) Franks Auto Sales- 471 tea Street 4) Stagecoach Auto Repair- 180 Rte. 8A North 5) Jeffrey A Sparda- 496 Tea Street

Val asked to hold Stagecoach for further discussion. There are no concerns or complaints regarding the other businesses.

Valentine Reid motioned to approve and sign class II and III licenses for businesses 1-5, holding on 4. Jared Bellows seconded the motion. All in Favor, Jared Bellows –Aye.

Regarding 4) Stagecoach Auto Repair- 180 Rte. 8A North

Val read the letter from Thorne Palmer, ConComm from December 13, 2024 regarding the shortfall noticed at the December 12 ConComm meeting. Val sees the progress made over the last year as a good faith effort to work with the ConComm in removing the cars from a resource area. He has done what they asked. Jared Bellows agreed.

Valentine Reid made a motion to approve and sign a class II license for Stagecoach Auto Repair- 180 Rte. 8A North, if the business keeps working with the Conservation Commission in good faith to fulfill the enforcement order. Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. All in Favor. Jared Bellows –Aye.

Approve and sign:

1) Payroll and vendor warrants

Valentine Reid made a motion to approve and sign payroll and vendor warrants. Jared Bellows seconded the motion. All in Favor. Jared Bellows –Aye.

2) Minutes from 11/18/2024 and 11/25/2024.

Valentine Reid made a motion to approve and sign Minutes from 11/18/2024. Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. All in Favor. Jared Bellows –Aye.

3) Vacation request from Secretary to the Boards for December 23rd through January 1st

Valentine Reid made a motion to approve vacation request from Secretary to the Boards for December 23rd through January 1st. Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. All in Favor. Jared Bellows –Aye.

Valentine Reid made a motion to approve to adjourn at 8:30. Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. All in Favor. Jared Bellows –Aye.

Documents reviewed in meeting

Agenda of Monday Dec. 16, 2024

Minutes from 11/18/2024

Frankly County Sheriff's office Invoice

Email form Bob Dean to Sarah Reynolds dated Dec 3rd, 2024 re:Request for Udated priority Projects

License Alcoholic Beverages

Change order Form from Specialty Vehicles for Charlemont Emergency Vehicles dated 11/15/2024

Invoice 11529 dated 11/15/2024 from Specialty Vehicles to Charlemont Emergency Service s Ambulance

Booska Flooring Estimate for Town Hall dated 10-16-2024

Letter to Charlemont Select Board from Scott Sullivan (HWY Set) re: Brandon Root dated Dec. 9, 2024

Letter to Charlemont Brian Dupree from Thorne Palmer Dec. 13, 2024 re: shortfall

Letter to Valentine Reid from Sharon Pleasant, CD Program Manager dated Oct. 21, 2024 re: CDF-G-2022/2023- Wendell/Charlemont activities quarter ending 9/30/2024

Excerpt re: Curb Cut regulations

Curb cut application from Jacob Rheinheimer, Avery Brook Rd. 11/21/2024

Email from Star Atkeson to Sarah Reynolds re: Time off request

Select Board FY 2026 Budget

Email from Dana Johnson to Sarah Reynolds dated December 13, 2024 re: new ambulance bill

Mass DEP Third party Inspection Report dated 11/13/2024 signed by Jan Ameen re: Charlemont Transfer Station

Standard Contract Form dated 12/16/2024, to do with State Budget Earmark for Sustainability Study

Franklin county Municipal Wage and salary FY2024