

CHARLEMONT SELECTBOARD

MEETING MINUTES

Monday, October 6th, 2025, 6:00 pm

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

Members in attendance: Jared Bellows, Kim Blakeslee, Wilder Sparks

Others in attendance: Sarah Reynolds, Marilyn Wilson, Joann Somani, Bill Baker, Bob Handsaker, Jeff Nielsen, Star Atkeson, Madison Schofield

Jared Bellows called the meeting to order at 6 pm. Joann Somani called the Rowe SB meeting to order at 6 PM.

Appointments:

6pm- Rowe Selectboard RE: Shared Fire Chief, ahead of potential Fire District, how sharing would work, position description, and memorandum of understanding to outline the process.

- Sarah explained the background of the two towns' shared services and what they are hoping to accomplish going forward with the shared Fire Chief and possibly Shared Emergency services in general. There will be a lapse between when Dennis Annear is due to retire and when the Fire District Legislation is ready. The plan is to hire a replacement Chief to work 20 hours in Rowe and 20 hours in Charlemont.
- They are considering offering \$75/80,000 per year as salary, plus benefits, (Sarah will research whether it is a competitive rate) and to use a Memorandum of Understanding, until the Fire District is up and running. They need to calculate the health insurance and workers comp and figure out which town will hold the health insurance— both towns belong to same insurance trust; Charlemont pays 75%, Rowe pays 85%. Rowe has an added admin role to help Fire and police. Fire Dept. admin, mainly expenses, haven't been split evenly between the towns. It needs to be ironed out going forward. Everything is a 50/50 split. They need an itemized list of what the Fire Chief will need: Car, fuel, cell phone etc.
- Both Towns will bring the proposal to their Town Meetings and then when passed, can advertise the position as acting or interim Fire Chief.
- The Fire District Legislation may be expected to go through at the end of next year or beginning of the year after, Sarah will reach out.
- Training costs will go down, equipment costs will go down, and the vehicle costs will go down for both towns. The building could be an issue, but it will be cheaper, split between two towns.
- The Board will be comprised of elected people from both towns, so, in effect, the Towns will have more control than they have now.

Joanne Semanie made a motion to pursue hiring an interim joint Fire Chief until legislation for a fire district has passed, with an updated Memorandum of understanding. Bill Barker seconded the motion. All in favor.

Jared Bellows made a made a motion to pursue hiring an interim joint Fire Chief until legislation for a fire district has passed, with an updated Memorandum of understanding. Wilder Sparks seconded the motion. All in favor.

Joanne Semanie made a motion to sign the letter of support for the fire district. Bill Barker seconded the motion. All in favor.

Jared Bellows made a motion to sign the letter in support of the Fire District. Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. All in favor.

Joanne Semanie motioned to adjourn the Rowe Select Board meeting. Marilyn Wilson seconded the motion. All in favor.

7Pm- Pursuant of the provisions of M.G.L. c.138. The Charlemont Select Board will hold a public hearing on an application for an All-Alcohol Package Store license submitted by Hinata Retreat LLC, 133 Warfield Road, Charlemont, MA 01339. The hearing will be held on October 6, 2025, at 7:00pm, in the Charlemont Town Hall Meeting Room located at 157 Main Street, Charlemont, MA 01339. This is to give notice to applicants, abutters, and interested parties.

Jared Bellows read the public notice for the hearing for the alcohol package store. Sarah clarified that the town doesn't currently have an all-alcohol license available, and that it would have to be just beer and wine. Jeff Nielsen is fine with that. There was no response from abutters, the hearing was advertised in the Recorder. **Wilder Sparks made a motion to grant the license. Jared Bellows seconded the motion. All in favor.** Once the ABCC says they can issue the license they will do so in another meeting, and it can be paid for.

Administrators Report:

1) Open Space Plan edits needed from review of the submittal; letter needed from chair once edits complete. It is tentatively approved by the State with a few additions needed for the Open Space and Recreation Plan including a letter from the Select Board that they approve plan. It will be filed with the plan. Jared Bellows said he would be happy to sign it.

2) Feedback from questions to attorney about National Grid Legate Hill Pole Hearing Condition and scheduling follow up meeting with National Grid.

- David Denesky is the lawyer at KPLaw that specializes in the pole agreements and interfacing with Utilities, he was out when Sarah inquired about the stipulation that Valentine Reid had asked for, that National Grid pay for the attachment of Broadband fiber to the new poles that were in the pole hearing.
- There was a previous agreement between Broadband and National Grid that needs to be considered. There is case law that attachments that need to be moved because of NG moving the poles needs to be paid for by NG. NG lost a case in court about that.
- Bob Handsaker said that the DPU is reviewing rules, and that rule is already in there. Eversource follows that, and NG doesn't. Bob thinks that the new midspan poles may not be considered new poles as they are a part of the same existing service. It is not an expansion of service.

3) Bridge Updates- South River Road Bridge Update, will re-open in the middle of the month and then be repaved at the end of the month, there will be an alternate route.

Chickley Bridge Department of Transportation Meeting Wednesday, October 15, 2025, at 6 PM via Zoom. Mass DOT has meetings at 25 %, 50% and 75% during the design phase. Sarah is hoping a SB representative can join the meeting. Wilder Sparks will do it. It's a TIP project, run by the State. They need to do easements, etc. They will build a bridge next to it, alter the road, and then destroy the old bridge.

Agenda items (Discussion/Vote):

1) Deerfield River Wild and Scenic question answers sent from Christopher Curtis for the section 7 review, vote on letter of support request

The Board got the answers to the questions they had asked Christopher Curtis about the Wild and Scenic Designation. Some aren't satisfied with the answer to question number 3. Sarah talked to Christopher Curtis who wanted to put them directly in touch with the Park Service person that does the section 7 reviews. He will come with the Chair of the Westfield River committee to talk to the Select Board about it. Town Counsel advised Sarah to have the Select Board talk to the person who does the section 7 review as well. It will be at the October 27th Select Board meeting.

2) Police Detail Rate Memo and request for Department of Transportation letter

The Board spoke about the letter. Chief Pelletier would like to raise the rate that they charge vendors for police detail to \$70. An hour effective August 1st. This does not come out of the police budget. If there is a town project, the town does not get charged at that rate.

Kim Blakeslee made a motion to write a letter in support of the increase in rate for detail, up to \$70. an hour. Wilder Sparks seconded the motion. Jared Bellows abstained from the vote, as he does work for the police. Kim and Wilder are in favor.

3) Letter to support Fire District Legislation (see the Rowe appointment, above)

4) Upper Pioneer Valley Veterans Service District, Municipal Agreement renewal.

It's the standard two-year agreement. There are no complaints.

Jared Bellows motioned to renew the agreement. Wilder Sparks seconded the motion. All in favor.

Approve and Sign:

1) Minutes of August 18, 2025, September 2, 2025

Jared Bellows made a motion to approve the August 18th, and September 2nd Minutes as written. Wilder Sparks seconded the motion. All in favor.

2) Payroll and Vendor Warrants from September 2 to present.

Jared Bellows made a motion to sign all payroll and vendor warrants from September 2nd to present. Wilder Sparks seconded the motion. All in favor.

Jared Bellows made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:21. Wilder Sparks seconded the motion. All in favor

Documents reviewed in meeting

- Agenda for October 6, 2025
- Minutes from August 18th, and September 2nd, 2025
- Letter from Jason Pelletier, Chief of police to the Charlemont Select Board, dated July 22, 2025, re: Police detail rate increase to 70.00/hour. Effective date August 1, 2025
- Pole Project (3) c law explainer print-out from Town Counsel. 4 pages
- 220 CMR 45.00- 45.11 Pole Attachment, duct, conduit and right of way complaint and enforcement procedures
- Email from Sarah Reynolds to Brooke Shulda and Dennis Annear dated September 10th, 2025, re: Shared Chief Services
- Email from Christopher Curtis to the Select Board dated September 25, 2025, re: SelectBoard Meeting on Deerfield River; Questions and answers about National Park Service section 7 review. 3 pages

- Memorandum of understanding between the Town of Charlemont and the Town of Rowe regarding Fire Chief Employment January 28, 2019, signed by Rowe and Charlemont SB members