

CHARLEMONT SELECTBOARD

MEETING MINUTES

Monday, February 3rd, 2025, 6:00 pm

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

Members in attendance: Kim Blakeslee, Valentine Reid, Jared Bellows

Others in attendance: Sarah Reynolds, Thorne Palmer, Star Atkeson, Madison Schofield

On phone: Colleen Champ

Valentine Reid called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm

Appointments: 6:00 PM – Thorne Palmer, Town Clerk RE: Town Meeting Election Openings, vacant appointed positions, Bylaw Document for Town Meeting and adding hours for transfer station attendant.

Vacant appointed positions: Earth Removal needs a Select Board representative and a new person to be appointed. Registrars should be appointed in March. People can start pulling papers tomorrow. It can be advertised online, in the newsletter at the Transfer Station, on the website, and the sign out front. Only those whose seats are coming to term need to pull papers.

Bylaw Document for Town Meeting: Thorne spoke about the bylaw document he has been working on. He has verified the bylaw additions since 1946 Bylaws were being put at the end of the document. Thorne proposed to integrate the bylaws into sections that made sense be taken apart and reformatted.

Val told Jared and Kim that he had suggested checking the bylaws against the Town Meeting books to make sure they were accurate. Val asked that Thorne to make a documentation of changes from the version which passed at Town Meeting and the version that is in the book. He'd like it to be brought to Town Meeting reaffirming as is already true. After that it can be edited. Thorne said that he can put in red anything that wasn't previously in there. Thorne gave the source of the bylaw, the year and meeting it was voted. Anything without a checkmark is older than 1946. Thorne put in lists of MGLs that were adopted. Later laws were repealed or changed; he made a list of those. Val suggested two different check boxes for voted and approved, a version with the bylaws and a version with the letters from the AG.

The Board is happy with the work. Thorne would like input on the sections. He'd like to bring to town Meeting this year. The warrant needs to get to the attorney in April. Val suggested doing it at a special town meeting, as it may take up a lot of time. If other Boards will weigh in on the sequence, the document should be sent to all boards with a deadline. Thorne will create an appendix with all the Ag's letters in chronological order. Val would like an expanded version with the AG's letters, MGLs, Guide to old section, project charter, goal timeline. 1) pass as bylaws as written and already passed. 2) next phase edits and updates.

They spoke about getting attorney guidance in some wording changes. In 2012, Board of Selectman was changed to the Select Board. Thorne will call the AG and ask whether it can be changed in the document. He'll send the SB the list of MGLs and Acts and will highlight in red every change in the document, and the few things that were repealed and replaced.

Adding hours for transfer station attendant: Thorne recommended that an extra transfer Station attendant be added on Wednesdays. It would amount to 5 hours for 26 days, 130 hours total, \$2,210. They can ask FinComm to take it for the reserve fund this year as its not in the budget. Then take it to Town meeting with increases. There should be 2 attendants at all times.

Kim would like to know if a transfer station day falls on a holiday, what plan is in place to make up for the day. People had asked this about it. Kim thinks there should be a policy to plan on a day being open if it is closed on a federal holiday. Val suggested writing a policy up with Thorne and bringing it to the next meeting.

Administrator's Report:

1) National Grid Fleet Electrification Assessment Reports: Sarah will send the spreadsheet in an email. There are 5 vehicles that could be replaced with electric vehicles: The two police cruisers, the light duty pickup, HWY and Fire Chief's Tahoes. The two police cruisers would be replaced with Ford Mustangs. Fire Chief Tahoe would be replaced with Chevy Equinox EV. The Light duty pickup could be replaced with a F150 Lightning Pro. To be in compliance with the DEP Diesel replacement Program, they need to replace 5 vehicles. A lot of towns don't have the money. There are grants and funding. Anything 4WD plus plow isn't eligible as the EV technology isn't there yet.

2) Follow up on Speeding on North River Road: Ashley Sparks had sent an email. She travels North River Road and thinks it's a dangerous situation with the speeding and the cars parked on both sides and people walking. She thinks it was better when cars were parked lower down. The cars were breaking the edges of the road down below. Jared wouldn't mind prohibiting parking on both sides. DCR said they would put in parking. Sarah could ask the status of that. Jared will follow up with HWY regarding line painting. Infrastructure money could be used for that.

3) Fairgrounds Proposal Request updates on Exhibit Hall Upgrades Cost: Grant rounds are open. Regarding the fairgrounds, they could do certain things to bring it up to code: like the sprinkler system. Riston got back to Sarah, letting her know it would be 500,000 to 1 mil. to bring it to code. There is a grant she could get to have someone look at it and do the engineering design work for minimum code requirement. She can apply within the next few months. It will also be an opportunity to figure out the bathroom. More information will be coming.

4) EV Charger Update for the chargers on School Street /Review and approve charger proposal from EC Renewables: This item will be for the SB to take home. Sarah will get more information and a preliminary quote.

Liaison Reports:

1) **** Legislation for Fire Chief to work until 68 has passed, re-appoint Dennis Annear as Fire Chief. Jared Bellows made a motion to reappoint Dennis Annear as Fire Chief. Valentine Reid seconded the motion. All in favor.**

Agenda items:

1) Franklin Regional Council of Governments Cooperative Public Health Agreement Renewal: The Board spoke about what FRCOG does and that MGL requires some services. If they didn't sign the contract, they would have to have a different solution. The deadline is March 15th. FRCOG is understaffed and some of the services have been wanting.

2) Department of Public utilities Inquiry on pole attachments and conduit access on public rights of way: The DPU is looking at the process. Interested stakeholders can make comments from February 18th until March 18th.

3) KP Law notice of the increase in cost of legal services to the Town: The Board acknowledged the increase. They are still well within budget for the year.

4) Upper Pioneer Valley Veterans Service District asks about District Towns adopting tax exemption clauses for Veterans Property Tax: Val would like the assessors in the conversation. Sarah will send to the assessors and see if they will make a presentation at Town Meeting. They can bring it back.

5) Franklin Regional Council of Governments Resilient Deerfield River Watershed Coalition in need of a Charlemont Representative: A multi-town committee is being formed around climate change and the watershed. They can ask Andrea Santos and Ashley Sparks and send out to the Boards. There is a good stipend being offered.

6) Question about interest in participation in a grant to fund trail work with Heath and Rowe to complete a long-distance trail that connects Shelburne to the Mohawk Trail State Forest: Charlemont would not be responsible for maintenance.

Valentine Reid made a motion to participate in the grant to fund trail work with Heath and Rowe to complete a long-distance trail that connects Shelburne to the Mohawk Trail State Forest. Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. All in favor.

7) Letter for school funding reimbursement: The Board wrote their own letter and gave to Martha Therber. It is factually accurate. **Jared Bellows made a motion in favor of signing and sending off. Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. All in favor.**

Approve and Sign:

1) Minutes from January 13, 2025 **Valentine Ried motioned to approve and sign the minutes from January 13th, 2025. Jared Bellows seconded the motion. All in favor.**

2) Payroll and Vendor Warrants **Valentine Reid motioned to approve and sign payroll and vendor warrants. Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. All in favor.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 PM

Documents reviewed in meeting

- February 3, 2025 Select Board Agenda
- Email from James McGrath to Sarah Reynolds dated 12/22/2025 re: Charlemont level 2 chargers w attachment EVSE EV Charger Installation Preliminary Proposal, Jan 19, 2025
- Letter to Senator Paul Mark from the Office of the Select Board dated, February 3, 2025, endorsement of the 2022 Rural School Report
- Letter to Representative Blais from the Office of the Select Board, dated February 3, 2025, endorsement of the 2022 Rural School Report
- Letter to Governor Healy from the Office of the Select Board, dated February 3, 2025, endorsement of the 2022 Rural School Report
- Email from Liam Cregan to Sarah Reynolds, dated 1/23/2025, re: Woodlands Partnership Grant with attachment: Highlands Through Trail Concept Map.pdf
- Email from Kimberly MacPhee to Sarah Reynolds dated 1/23/2025, re: resilient Deerfield River Watershed Coalition – members needed!
- Letter from Lauren Goldberg/ KP Law to Sarah Reynolds dated 1/13/2025, re: Notice of Rate Increases for FY26.
- Chapter 277 of the Acts of 2024, The Commonwealth of Massachusetts / 193 General Court / An Act authorizing the Town of Charlemont to continue the employment of Dennis Annear as an on-call Firefighter.
- Email from Riston Donelson to Sarah Reynolds dated 1/10/2025 Re: Bid for Exhibit Hall
- Memorandum from Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities, Kerri DeYoung Phillips and Scott Seigal, to the Select Board, MLPs and MMA, dated 1/17/2025, Re: Request for Comments and Data (Inquiry on Pole Attachments and Conduit Access on public Rights of Way)
- Email from Ashley Sparks to Sarah Reynolds dated 1/16/2025 re: North River Road
- Town of Charlemont Bylaws, Thorne Palmer's draft update
- National Grid, Charlemont Fleet Electrification Assessment dated 1/13/2025
- DEP/Diesel Emissions Reduction Act Report Spreadsheet (vehicles in fleet eligible for upgrades with recommendations)