

CHARLEMONT SELECTBOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Monday, June 22nd, 2026, 6:00 pm
in person and via conference call, Town Hall, 157 Main Street, Charlemont MA

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

Others in attendance: Sarah Reynolds, Johnny Deppin, Star Atkeson, Missy Griswold, Nate Bellows, Bob Handsaker, Cheryl Handsaker

Administrators Report:

- 1) Digital Equity Grant agreement modification – discuss and vote on extension paperwork, new end date to be December 31,2026 The state extended the program. Cheryl Handsaker is good with it.
Wilder Sparks made a motion to sign the document *Amendment to Agreement*. Jared Bellows seconded the motion. All in favor.
- 2) Report on June 10th Ambulance regionalization meeting, field trip to Northfield June 25th
 - Sarah reported on ongoing discussions regarding the potential regionalization of ambulance services. She and the Ambulance Director attended a regionalization meeting at the Shelburne Fire Department on June 10 and are scheduled to visit Northfield on June 25 to learn about its regional ambulance model.
 - Discussion focused on possible regional models, service goals, and maintaining both a basic life support (BLS) ambulance and an advanced life support (ALS)/paramedic ambulance.
 - Charlemont is participating in discussions with Heath, Hawley, Rowe, Leyden, and Shelburne Falls. The regional committee, made up of ambulance chiefs and Select Board representatives, is developing funding options and cost-sharing formulas for consideration by Town Meetings. Proposed formulas include factors such as call volume, equalized valuation (EQV), and population. Shelburne Falls has the highest call volume in the region, with Charlemont second.
 - Sarah also reported that FRCOG has initiated discussions about police regionalization. Previous efforts had stalled but may be revisited.
 - The Board supported Sarah's continued participation in the regional meetings. She will share additional information as it becomes available.
- 3) Rural Policy Plan Municipal Sustainability Recommendation draft
The Massachusetts Rural Policy Advisory Commission sent out their draft recommendations for the 2026 Rural Policy Plan and are still taking comment on them. Sarah encouraged everyone to comment, The rec tax is on there as well as the PILOT program.
- 4) Fire Truck Earmark Update
The Firetruck earmark came through in time for the first payment. It will cover the change order and outfitting as well. It amount to 599,000.00

Liaison Reports:

- 4) Letter of support request for school funding in State budget
The Board received a sample letter template that was very good. It could be personalized with a paragraph pertaining to Charlemont. Wilder will write a letter using the template.

Appointment:

**** Broadband Committee, Cheryl and Bob Handsaker, Broadband customer privacy policy.:**

- Bob Handsaker reported that only the MLP Manager, Treasurer, and Sarah currently have access to broadband customer information. The Board discussed amending the privacy policy to allow the MLP Manager to authorize additional access as needed for tasks such as audits and contacting unresponsive customers. Amy Wales and Cheryl Handsaker agreed to assist with the audit if granted access.
- **Wilder Sparks made a motion to amend the Broadband customer privacy policy to allow the MLP Manager to authorize additional access as needed. Jared Bellows seconded the motion. All in favor.**
- The Board briefly discussed access to the broadband electric meter and the Town Hall basement lock.

Agenda items (Discussion/Vote):

- 1) Vote on Wild and Scenic Designation, with the Charlemont Bridges excluded in the legislation
Wilder said the changes made addressed his concerns. It includes the bridges, including the Tower Road bridge. Jared is also good with it.
Wilder Sparks made a motion to support the Wild and Scenic Designation. Jared Bellows seconded the motion. All in favor.
- 2) Police Chief Hiring process, information from the Municipal Resources group.
 - Sarah reported that Kim Blakeslee wanted to use the same company that assisted with the Fire Chief hiring process to hire the new police chief as well. Municipal Resources, Inc. MRI, which is staffed by former fire chiefs, provides applicant screening, candidate assessments, and recommendations to hiring boards.
 - Board members discussed the value of using an outside consultant to conduct the vetting process, particularly with Jared Bellows recusing himself. Sarah reported that MRI quoted \$5,000 for its recruitment assistance package. She noted that funding could be requested from the Finance Committee through reserve funds.

Kim Blakeslee moved to use Municipal Resources, Inc. to assist with the Fire Chief hiring process and to agree to the fee. Wilder Sparks seconded the motion. The motion passed, with Jared Bellows abstaining.

Wilder Sparks moved to petition the Finance Committee for \$5,000 to fund the recruitment services. Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. The motion passed, with Jared Bellows abstaining.

 - The Board reviewed the Police Chief job description and discussed expectations for the position, including community visibility, patrol responsibilities, and regular communication with the Select Board.
 - Members discussed requiring regular reports from the Police Chief and agreed that clear communication expectations should be established at the outset. The Board also discussed strengthening the job description by clarifying patrol duties, on-call responsibilities, and accountability for meeting job expectations. Sarah suggested a contract can be written up in addition to the job description.
 - Jared called a point of order, if they wish to speak about the job description it should be on the agenda. The job description will be placed on a future agenda for review.

- Sarah will gather information from other towns regarding patrol requirements and reporting expectations for police chiefs and bring it back to the Board for further discussion.

3) Yearly appointments to town Committees, Commissions, Emergency Services (Police, Fire, EMS)

Nate Bellows, Chair of Agriculture Commission recommended to the Select Board that Melissa Griswold be appointed to the Agriculture Commission.

Wilder Sparks made a motion to add Melissa Griswold as a 5th member of the Agriculture Commission. Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. Jared Bellows abstained. Kim Blakeslee and Wilder Sparks in favor.

Wilder Sparks made a motion to reappoint Nate Bellows to the Agriculture Commission. Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. Jared Bellows abstained. Kim Blakeslee and Wilder Sparks in favor.

Police appointments

Wilder Sparks made a motion that a modification be made that the FT police officer be edited to *interim* FT police officer, and to approve all the other appointments as written. Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. All in Favor. Jared Bellows abstained.

Ambulance EMTs

Jared said it was good as written; there is no one new.

Jared Bellows made a motion to appoint the list as written. Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. All in favor.

4) Selectboard Liaison List and board organization

Jared Bellows made a motion that Sarah become Transit Authority Representative, with Kim Blakeslee as the alternate. The rest of the liaison list will remain the same. Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. All in favor.

- Sarah will be main liaison for FRCOG council, Kim will be alternate
- Wilder will be Finance Committee liaison

Jared Bellows made a motion to accept the list with the modifications. Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. All in favor.

Board Organization will remain the same. (Jared and Kim co-chairing)

5) Curb Cut permits a) two - located on Potter Road Extension, no address number yet; b) one- located at 104 West Oxbow Road; c) one -located at 0 Legate Hill Road

The sites have been signed off on by police and fire.

Wilder Sparks made a motion to sign the curb cut applications. Jared Bellows seconded the motion. All in favor

Approve and Sign:

1) Minutes of June 8th, 2026

Jared Bellows made a motion to approve the Minutes of June 8th. Kim Blakeslee seconded the motion. All in favor.

2) Payroll and Vendor Warrants

Jared Bellows made a motion to approve the payroll and vendor warrants. Wilder Sparks seconded the motion. All in favor.

3) Administrators request to use two remaining vacation days

Wilder Sparks made a motion to approve Sarah's vacation days. Jared Bellows seconded the motion. All in favor.

Kim asked that vacation day rollover be added to the next agenda.

Jared Bellows made a motion to adjourn at 7:04. Wilder Sparks seconded the motion. All in favor.

Documents reviewed in meeting

Select Board Agenda for June 22, 2026

Liaison / Representatives list, updated for 2026

2026 Rural Policy Plan, Municipal Sustainability Recommendations draft

Draft legislation language from Christopher Curtis: Sec.1303. Deerfield Wild and Scenic River, Massachusetts

Amendment 4 To Agreement 22762 Between Massachusetts Technology Collaborative and Town of Charlemont, Signed, dated June 22, 2026

Town of Charlemont Police Department, dated June 12 2026, 2027 appointment requests

Charlemont Emergency Services 6/20/2026 Re: EMT Appointments FY2027

Municipal Resources Inc Professional services agreement, June 22, 2026

Email to Sarah Reynolds from Sean Kelly dated June 16, 2026, re: Charlemont, MA Police Chief recruitment Proposal

Town of Charlemont, Chief of Police, letter of Resignation